

**Alexander, Steven**

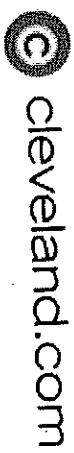
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**From:**  
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Capitol Letter <cleveland.com\_newsletters@update.cleveland.com>  
Friday, July 06, 2018 6:15 AM  
Alexander, Steven  
'Right-to-work' group threatens to sue Ohio after Supreme Court ruling

Friday, July 6, 2018

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# Capitol Letter

Laura Hancock, Jeremy Pelzer & Jackie Borchardt





The west entrance of the Ohio Senate Building is a smaller-scale version of a famed staircase in the Paris Opera House, with Carrara marble from Italy and gold leaf on the walls. (Laura Hancock/cleveland.com)

## Rotunda Rumbblings

**Just due it:** A “right-to-work” advocacy group has threatened Ohio with a lawsuit if it doesn’t immediately stop collecting union dues from non-union state workers. But [cleveland.com](http://cleveland.com)’s Jeremy Pelzer reports that the agency that handles payroll for state employees hasn’t taken any action so far in response to the June 27 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Janus v.*

AFSCME.

**Moving forward:** Supporters of a proposed November ballot issue that would set new standards for dialysis treatment and cap what for-profit clinics can charge submitted more than 475,000 signatures Wednesday, [cleveland.com's Kaylee Remington reports](http://cleveland.com's Kaylee Remington reports).

**Also moving forward:** Supporters of the "Neighborhood Safety, Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Amendment" also submitted more than 730,000 signatures on Wednesday in hopes of making the November ballot, [cleveland.com's Jackie Borchardt writes](http://cleveland.com's Jackie Borchardt writes). The proposed amendment would reduce penalties for individuals convicted of nonviolent drug and drug paraphernalia possession crimes and direct the cost savings to addiction treatment and crime victim programs. The secretary of state's office has until July 24 to certify each proposed amendment collected at least 305,591 valid signatures.

**All aboard:** Columbus will have Ohio's first self-driving shuttles by December, [writes cleveland.com's Laura Hancock](http://writes cleveland.com's Laura Hancock). The city, state and Ohio State University are seeking proposals for companies that can operate a shuttle service downtown.

**Back from the dead?** The Libertarian Party of Ohio has filed petitions this week to regain Ohio "minor-party" status for the first time since the 2014 election. As [Pelzer explains](http://Pelzer explains), if the party can get on the ballot this year, it's likely to run Columbus filmmaker [and anti-Gov. John Kasich satirical group](http://and anti-Gov. John Kasich satirical group) founder) Travis Irvine for governor.

**Jordan fights back:** U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan, in an interview with reporters on the Fourth of July in Fremont, Ohio, again disputed claims that he knew Ohio State wrestlers had been sexually abused by a team doctor. [Cleveland.com's Sabrina Eaton rounds up](http://Cleveland.com's Sabrina Eaton rounds up) the latest in the nationally publicized story, including Jordan's assertion that an ex-wrestler making the accusations has sent him harassing emails.

**Inside the Statehouse:** Ohio officials laid the first cornerstone for the Ohio Statehouse 171 years ago. Cleveland.com's Laura Hancock shows the building's rich history with 16 images.

**He's running:** Literally. Cleveland.com's Seth Richardson caught up (no easy task) to Republican Attorney General Mike DeWine on the Fourth of July doing one of the things he loves best: marching in parades.

Richardson has an entertaining time-lapse video of DeWine logging nearly 8,500 steps before noon. The GOP gubernatorial nominee was of course accompanied by his wife, Fran, handing out her legendary cookbook.

**Where are they now?** The status of about 2,300 former students from the shuttered Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow is unknown, the Associated Press reveals. Many students from the controversial online charter school transferred to other schools, but the state doesn't know what happened to the rest, the AP reports.

**No reply:** "Records show more than 200 courts across Ohio failed to respond to Gov. John Kasich's executive order seeking more information on their history with the national background check database used in stopping gun-related crimes," reports Julie Carr Smyth of the AP. Those that didn't respond were mostly small mayor's courts, the report says.

**Kasich, the anti-Trump:** The governor is out with another op-ed, this time decrying President Donald Trump's trade war. The piece appears in the Financial Times.

**Unfinished business:** Ohio lawmakers sent a lot of bills to Gov. John Kasich before they took a summer break. But they left some high-profile legislation hanging, reports Carr Smyth of the Associated Press. That includes payday loan restrictions and a controversial "stand your ground" bill.

**Preventive measures:** The Washington Post looked at the case of the 4,000 eggs and embryos that were lost at the University Hospitals fertility center. The Post report features an interview with Ohio Sen. Joe Schiavoni who is working on a bill “he hopes will help prevent such disasters in the future and introduce penalties for fertility clinics that violate the new safeguards,” Post reporter Ariana Eunjung Cha writes.

**For what ailes you:** If you’re wondering whether your illness would qualify you for legal medicinal marijuana in Ohio, Borchardt created a handy list of medical conditions.

## **Full Disclosure**

Five things we learned from the April 9 financial disclosure statement of state Rep. Jeff Rezabek, a Dayton Republican who is resigning to become a Montgomery County Juvenile Court judge. Gov. John Kasich appointed him to the new post Monday.

1. Rezabek reported earning \$25,000 to \$49,999 last year as an attorney in private practice licensed in Ohio and New York. He made \$65,476 as a lawmaker, according to the Ohio Treasurer’s office.
2. At some time in 2017, he owed at least \$1,000 to Nelnet, Fifth Third Bank, Day Air Credit Union, Bank of America, Credit First, N.A. and U.S. Bank. His campaign committee, Citizens for Rezabek, owed him at least \$1,000 at some point last year.
3. The Ohio House reimbursed him \$3,197.38 for mileage between home and Columbus. The Ohio Judicial Conference gave Rezabek \$173.25 for a hotel room during its annual meeting in Columbus, when he participated in a legislative panel. The Ohio House Republican Organizational Committee paid for \$133.40 in travel. The Ohio Chamber of Commerce paid for his \$69 lodging at its Policy Conference at Salt Fork in September. The Campaign for Fair Sentencing of Youth paid \$487.40 for his hotel, meals

and flight to a conference last year.

4. He received an unspecified gift from Virginia Ragan, a prominent Republican donor, worth at least \$75.

5. School Choice Ohio Inc. paid \$33.66 for Rezabek to attend a "lunch and learn" session March 30, 2017. He received at least one Dayton Dragons baseball ticket last year, worth \$20.97, from the Dayton Development Coalition. He also received \$58 in food at a Dayton Dragons game from the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce.

## **Birthdays**

Saturday: State Rep. John Patterson; Beth Vanderkooi, executive director of Greater Columbus Right To Life; James E. Campbell, Ohio's 38th governor (1843-1924); A. Victor Donahey, Ohio's 50th governor (1873-1946)

## **Straight From The Source**

"I normally only give this to mediocre college football coaches."

- Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, while presenting a key to the city to Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur. Kapszukiewicz took some flak from Ohio State University fans and the University of Toledo earlier this year for giving a ceremonial key to University of Michigan football coach Jim Harbaugh. Harbaugh, a Toledo native, headlined an event there in May that raised \$100,000 for legal aid services.

*One of our aims with Capitol Letter is frequent communication with you, the reader. We value your thoughts and suggestions about the*

*newsletter. What do you think of it? What features do you like? What could we do better? Is there a topic you'd like to see us address? And what time would you like to receive the newsletter? We've been sending it at about 6:15 a.m. Would you like it to arrive earlier? We value your feedback and are committed to making Capitol Letter your essential first read of the morning. Email us at [Capitolletter@cleveland.com](mailto:Capitolletter@cleveland.com).*

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From: Ben Stein, Policy Matters Ohio <news@policymattersohio.org>  
Sent: Saturday, June 30, 2018 9:06 AM  
To: Alexander, Steven  
Subject: Keep your head up: News from Policy Matters



### **Keep your head up: News from Policy Matters**

It's been a rough couple of weeks for progressives in Ohio and across the nation. But let's not hang our heads. This edition of eNews features nine things we can do—right now—to help build a world we all want to live in. As everyone's favorite Wobbly songwriter Joe Hill put it, "Don't waste any time mourning — Organize!"

**We can join and support unions:** Though the Supreme Court's decision in Janus v. AFSOME is a transparent attempt to divide public sector workers, it doesn't prevent them from organizing. Though corporate-sponsored union-busting legislation has private sector unions in the crosshairs, it can't stop us from joining together to take back our workplaces. We know that unions make for safer, better jobs, especially for women and people of color. Now's the time to rally around our unions, public *and* private.



**We can resist new Medicaid regulations:** Looking for ways to stand up for Medicaid expansion? Then check out our website's new Medicaid [landing page](#), where we've packaged Amanda Woodrum's [deep dive](#) into the effects of proposed cuts to expansion; Wendy Patton's [exposé](#) of the federal government's misleading justifications for Medicaid rule changes; factsheets that calculate the number of Medicaid enrollees at risk of losing their coverage in each Ohio county; and lots more. The page is a primer for understanding the threats posed by Governor Kasich's proposed changes, and a toolkit for resisting them.

**We can make it easy for our officials to condemn Medicaid cuts:**

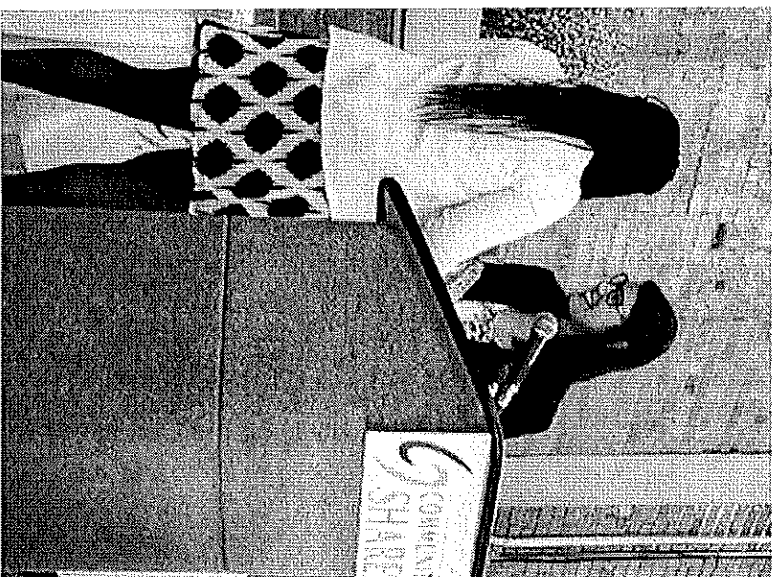
As the Cleveland office's resident attorney, Amanda Woodrum is making it simple for county and municipal governments to declare opposition to new Medicaid regulations. Her [two-page template](#) lays out language for an official resolution, "ur[ging] the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to disapprove the State of Ohio's Medicaid waiver request that would force harmful cuts to Medicaid Expansion enrollment and increase the rate of uninsured in Ohio." You can find the relevant data in your county's [factsheet](#). Just enter the information into the fillable PDF and send the ready-made resolution to your county legislator or city council.

**We can turn taxes right-side up:** As a share of their income, Ohio's wealthiest 1 percent pay around half what people pay at the bottom of the income scale. Experts call it an upside-down model. Zach and

Wendy have authored a plan to turn our taxes right-side up. Help us get our plan in front of the people who need to see it most: gubernatorial candidates Rich Cordray and Mike DeWine. Tweet this link to @RichCordray and @MikeDeWine, and let them know Ohio's income tax system needs an overhaul.

**We can (and did!) pressure our Senators to do what's right:**

Though the U.S. House of Representatives passed a Farm Bill that included shameful cuts to SNAP, the Senate passed a far better, bipartisan bill that defends SNAP and helps food banks. Now the two houses need to agree on a compromise bill. Keep up the pressure on Senators Brown and Portman—both of whom supported the Senate bill—and call, email, and Tweet your representative to show your support for a Farm Bill that won't let Ohioans go hungry.



*Cynthia Connolly accepts Community Shares' 2018 Rising Activist award*

**We can celebrate inspiring activists:** Policy Matters board members, staff, and interns turned out in support of Cynthia Connolly this week, as she received the 2018 Rising Activist award from Greater Cleveland Community Shares. The award honors Cynthia's work as our development director, and her advocacy for Cleveland's Native American community. In her acceptance speech, Cynthia showed she's ready for what's next: "There is so much work yet to be done, and I'm just getting started." Email Cynthia to congratulate her!

**We can invest in our kids:** High-quality child care and early childhood education make for happy, healthy kids who grow up to be compassionate, productive adults. Rob Moore's new report explains how, and lays out policies that would expand access. Among them is a recommendation that Ohio Department of Job & Family Services straighten out their flawed formula for reimbursement. Let's make sure they get the message. Tweet @OhioJFS with a link to Rob's report, and urge them to take his advice so more families can afford the kind of child care that brightens everyone's future.

**We can talk about our important work:** Hannah Halbert helped another edition of our summer roadshow in support of A Winning Economic Agenda for Ohio's Working Families, our collaboration with Innovation Ohio Education Fund. Rob spoke about access to high-quality child care at an event for the Women's Fund of Central Ohio, and led breakout groups at a forum for the Health Policy Institute of Ohio. Daniel Ortiz took part in a community roundtable about public transit, and a press conference by Latinx leaders responding to ICE's massive workplace deportation raids on Ohio businesses. Mike Shields participated in a panel at Ohio Asian American / Pacific Islander Legislation Day, discussing immigrants' rights on the job. We're always grateful for your outreach too! Please talk up Policy Matters' work during your July 4<sup>th</sup> barbecues, family picnics, camping trips, rallies and marches!

And we can form a union!

VIEW ONLINE

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**Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2018 10:49 PM  
**To:** DL\_Hannah  
**Subject:** Hannah News Stories for Wednesday, June 27, 2018

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

### IN TODAY'S HANNAH REPORT:

[Please click here to read the entire Hannah Report.](#)

### Today's Stories

- [Senate Releases Calendar for Second Half of 2018](#)
- [House OKs Religious Rights Bills, Child Marriage Ban, Rules on Explicit Images](#)
- [Senate Passes Government Regulations Reduction, Community School Legislation](#)
- [Dems Thwarted in Effort to Report Out Payday Lending Bill](#)
- [Senate Panel Seeks to Clarify E-School 'Safe Harbor' Provisions](#)
- [Energy Standards Bill Still Not Ready to Move, Lawmakers Say](#)
- [Portman, Brown Tout Defense Investment, Push Lake Erie Clean-Up](#)
- [SCOTUS Rules against Public-Sector Labor Unions](#)
- [Reactions Roll In to SCOTUS Decision in Janus v. AFSCME 31](#)
- [U.S. Supreme Court Justice Kennedy to Retire](#)
- [Judicial Actions: Opinions; Appeals Accepted](#)
- [Executive Actions: Appointments](#)

### House Committee Reports

- [Agriculture and Rural Development](#)
- [Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security](#)
- [Civil Justice](#)
- [Government Accountability and Oversight](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Insurance](#)

### Senate Committee Reports

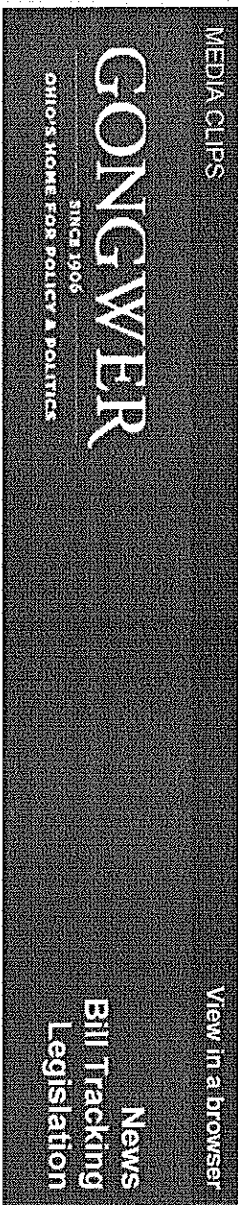
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- Finance
- Government Oversight and Reform
- Rules and Reference Committee
- Transportation, Commerce and Workforce

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**From:** Gongwer News Service <gongwerreports@gongwer-oh.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 02, 2018 8:36 AM  
**To:** Alexander, Steven  
**Subject:** Ohio Media Clips, Monday, July 2



## NEWS

Auditor's report shows opioids impact on Medicaid (Associated Press, 7/2/2018)

Ohio Lawmakers Approve Lake Erie Algae Prevention Bill (Associated Press, 7/2/2018)

Biden in Cincy: Trump's ideology is 'aggrandizing power' (Cincinnati Enquirer, 7/2/2018)

Complaint: Security should not stop black, female lawmaker (Cincinnati Enquirer, 7/2/2018)

Ohio's Trump country is fond of this Democrat (Cincinnati Enquirer, 7/2/2018)



First Ohio medical marijuana cultivator OK'd to grow cannabis, testing lab licenses awarded (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 7/2/2018)

Hey Washington, regular Ohioans agree on these federal budget fixes (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 7/2/2018)

Ohio's new compliant driver's licenses: What documents will you need? (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 7/2/2018)

Rep. Emilia Sykes files racism, sexism complaints with Ohio Civil Rights Commission over state building security allegations (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 7/2/2018)

Capitol Insider: Why is Ohio Medicaid defending pharmacy middlemen? (Columbus Dispatch, 7/2/2018)

Fireworks bill still up in the air as July Fourth holiday approaches (Columbus Dispatch, 7/2/2018)

Ohio teacher evaluations get an overhaul teachers like (Columbus Dispatch, 7/2/2018)

Ohio U and University of Toledo team up on health issues, including opioids (Columbus Dispatch, 7/2/2018)

Video catches Cordray dropping another Nazi reference (Columbus Dispatch, 7/2/2018)

Local child's death could spark statewide abuse registry (Dayton Daily News, 7/2/2018)

Ohio governor race: DeWine says he wants to make these changes to Ohio's early childhood programs (Dayton Daily News, 7/2/2018)

Some Ohio Democrats on ballot this year for Congress say Pelosi must go (Dayton Daily News, 7/2/2018)

2 Butler County Statehouse candidates among the state's top fundraisers since January (Journal-News, 7/2/2018)

Ohio lawmakers back bill requiring teachers to out transgender kids (Journal-News, 7/2/2018)

Lawmakers send Clean Lake 2020 Plan to Kasich (Port Clinton News Herald, 7/2/2018)

Fireworks regulations vary by state, city (Toledo Blade, 7/2/2018)

Government, military officials in favor of Trump's nuclear bailout plan (Toledo Blade, 7/2/2018)

Janus ruling unlikely to impact local unions, organizers say (Toledo Blade, 7/2/2018)

U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur to receive key to the city (Toledo Blade, 7/2/2018)

## EDITORIALS

Beacon Journal/Ohio.com editorial board: Repair online charter schools? Statehouse Republicans aren't there yet (Akron Beacon Journal, 7/2/2018)

**Ohio lawmakers pass questionable legislation in 'bill-a-thon' session:  
Thomas Suddes (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 7/2/2018)**

**Editorial: Senate payday delay hurts consumers but helps lobbyists  
(Columbus Dispatch, 7/2/2018)**

**Sherrod Brown steps up (Toledo Blade, 7/2/2018)**

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**Sent:** Tuesday, February 27, 2018 9:39 AM  
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## Morning Briefing: Summaries Of The News

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

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### In This Edition:

#### KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

1. Refusing To Work For Medicaid May Not Translate To Subsidies For ACA Plan
2. Following The Fire: Montana Scientists Seize Chance To Scrutinize Smoke Exposure
3. Political Cartoon: 'Just Clowning Around?'

HEALTH LAW

**4. 20 States Sue Government Claiming Repeal Of Individual Mandate's Tax Penalty  
Renders Law Unconstitutional**

**ADMINISTRATION NEWS**

**5. After Shooting, Administration Reconsiders Ban On Medicaid Funding For Certain  
Mental Health Facilities**

**SUPREME COURT**

**6. Supreme Court Hears Arguments For 'Fair Share' Case That Could Potentially Cripple  
Unions**

**VETERANS' HEALTH CARE**

**7. White House Chief Of Staff Tries To Soothe Veterans Groups' Concerns Over Scandal,  
Infighting At VA**

**MARKETPLACE**

**8. Buffett Sees Lower Costs, Better Care With New Initiative, But Warns 'Don't Expect  
Any Miracles Out Of Us'**

**MEDICAID**

**9. Imposing Work Mandate Will Cost Kentucky Nearly \$187M In First 6 Months. But  
Governor Vows Savings To Come.**

**PHARMACEUTICALS**

**10. Disaster-Response Preparedness Bill Could Hold Lots Of Goodies For Pharma**

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION**

**11. After 'Especially Difficult' Flu Season, FDA Panel To Weigh Changes To Next Year's  
Vaccine**

**12. Bulk Of People Who Use Heroin Are Functioning Addicts. Here's A Look At Their  
Lives**

**13. Nearly Everyone Has Frequent Heart Palpitations, But We Still Don't Know Much  
About Them**

**STATE WATCH**

**14. State Highlights: Son's \$1M Cancer Bill Cost Mass. Teacher Her Job, Complaint Claims; Texas Law To Protect Patients From Surprise Bills Leads To More Confusion**

#### **EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS**

**15. Viewpoints: Trumpcare Is Progress? Fewer Insured, Higher Rates, Debt; Amazon's Goals Full Of Conflicts**

### **From Kaiser Health News:**

#### **KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES**

### **1. Refusing To Work For Medicaid May Not Translate To Subsidies For ACA Plan**

In states that are instituting work requirements for Medicaid coverage, refusing to get a job will not likely make you eligible for subsidies to buy a marketplace plan. (Michelle Andrews, 2/27)

### **2. Following The Fire: Montana Scientists Seize Chance To Scrutinize Smoke Exposure**

The health effects of extended smoke exposure are largely unknown because it's difficult to conduct studies. But last summer's wildfire season has handed scientists a unique opportunity for research. (Nora Saks, Montana Public Radio, 2/27)

### **3. Political Cartoon: 'Just Clowning Around?'**

Kaiser Health News provides a fresh take on health policy developments with "Political Cartoon: 'Just Clowning Around?'" by Dan Piraro.

Here's today's health policy haiku:

**COGNITIVE TEST-MAKERS SEIZE ON THEIR TRUMP MOMENT**

MoCA makers say  
"Trump scored 100? No way!"  
Time to change the test.

- Kim Nichols Dauner

If you have a health policy haiku to share, please Contact Us and let us know if you want us to include your name. Keep in mind that we give extra points if you link back to a KHN original story.

## **Summaries Of The News:**

### **HEALTH LAW**

#### **4. 20 States Sue Government Claiming Repeal Of Individual Mandate's Tax Penalty Renders Law Unconstitutional**

The states also say in the suit that because the health law doesn't have a "severability clause" — a provision that says if one part of the law is struck by the courts, the rest would stand — if one part of it is struck down, the rest is invalid.

Reuters: Twenty States Sue Federal Government, Seeking End To Obamacare

A coalition of 20 U.S. states sued the federal government on Monday over Obamacare, claiming the law was no longer constitutional after the repeal last year of its requirement that people have health insurance or pay a fine. Led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel, the lawsuit said that without the individual mandate, which was eliminated as part of the Republican tax law signed by President Donald Trump in December, Obamacare was unlawful. (Beech, 2/27)

Modern Healthcare: 20 States Sue Federal Government To Abolish Obamacare

"Once the heart of the ACA — the individual mandate — is declared unconstitutional, the

remainder of the ACA must also fall," the states wrote in the complaint, filed in federal court in Fort Worth, Texas. (Teichert, 2/26)

Politico: 20 States Sue Over Obamacare Mandate — Again

The GOP tax law "eliminated the tax penalty of the ACA, without eliminating the mandate itself," the states argue in a complaint filed today in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of Texas. "What remains, then, is the individual mandate, without any accompanying exercise of Congress's taxing power, which the Supreme Court already held that Congress has no authority to enact." The Supreme Court in 2012 upheld Obamacare's individual mandate in one of the highest-profile court cases in years. The justices did not agree then with the Obama administration's main argument that the mandate penalty was valid under the Commerce Clause. But the justices did say that the mandate was a constitutional tax. (Haber Korn, 2/26)

Houston Chronicle: Texas Leads New Lawsuit To Effectively Repeal Obamacare

Texas teamed up with Wisconsin on Monday to resume the fight against Obamacare by leading the charge in a 20-state lawsuit the group of largely Republican attorneys general hope will kill off the Affordable Care Act. Attorney General Ken Paxton stressed the President Trump's tax overhaul, approved in Congress late last year, renders the the health care plan's individual mandate unconstitutional because the federal government no longer imposes a tax penalty. (Zelinski, 2/26)

Arizona Republic: Arizona Among 20 States Seeking Repeal Of Affordable Care Act Mandate  
The case was filed by Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on behalf of their states and attorneys general in 18 other states, including Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich. About 167,000 Arizonans enrolled for coverage in 2018 during last fall's enrollment period, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services website. (Coppola, 2/26)

In other health law news —

Modern Healthcare: Republicans Try Coverage Expansion: Idaho Showcases Red State Dilemma

As the 2018 election season kicks into high gear across the country, lawmakers in some red states find themselves at odds over how to grapple with continually rising premiums, large swaths of low-income uninsured and overall insurance market instability. Nowhere is that more evident than in Idaho. The state nabbed headlines by asking carriers to use "creativity" in



designing plans for the exchanges—including going outside the essential health benefit bounds set by the Affordable Care Act. (Luthi, 2/26)

The Hill: Iowa Lawmakers Move To Allow Health Plans That Skirt ObamaCare Rules  
State lawmakers in Iowa are moving to allow the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation to offer health insurance plans that don't comply with ObamaCare protections. Two bills moving through the state legislature aim to provide Farm Bureau members with plans that cost much less than plans that are currently available on Iowa's individual market. (Weixel, 2/26)

## ADMINISTRATION NEWS

### **5. After Shooting, Administration Reconsiders Ban On Medicaid Funding For Certain Mental Health Facilities**

A law currently bars Medicaid from paying for treatment in mental health facilities with more than 16 beds. The administration has already opened the way for states to seek waivers from the policy in cases involving treatment for substance abuse, so mental health treatments could be next. Meanwhile, outlets look at what Congress can realistically do on gun control, what states are taking action, and the limits on gun research.

The Associated Press: Administration Considers Expanding Mental Health Treatment  
Amid the outcry over the Florida school shootings, the Trump administration says it is "actively exploring" ways to help states expand inpatient mental health treatment using Medicaid funds. President Donald Trump again brought up the issue of mental hospitals in a meeting with governors on Monday, invoking a time when states maintained facilities for mentally ill and developmentally disabled people. "In the old days, you would put him into a mental institution," Trump said, apparently referring to alleged shooter Nikolas Cruz, whose troubling behavior prompted people close to him to plead for help from authorities, without success. (Alonso-Zaldivar, 2/27)

Los Angeles Times: What The Florida School Shooting Reveals About The Gaps In Our Mental Health System

After Adam Lanza burst into Sandy Hook Elementary School and gunned down 20 students and six educators, Connecticut's Office of the Child Advocate tapped Julian Ford to help make sense of the shooting. A professor of psychiatry at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and a practicing psychologist for 35 years, Ford served on an expert panel that conducted a

detailed review of Lanza's brief life to look for "any warning signs, red flags, or other lessons that could be learned." The resulting report painted a picture of an odd, sensitive child with significant communication difficulties who became an anxious and withdrawn adolescent. ... At every turn, the report saw missed opportunities to treat Lanza's multiple interpersonal and mental health difficulties ... and to draw him out of his profound isolation. (Healy, 2/26)

The Washington Post: What Will Congress Realistically Do On Guns After The Florida Shooting?

Congress is back this week for the first time since the Parkland, Fla., high school massacre. Sustained national media attention on the shooting, emotional confrontations between politicians and survivors and their families, as well as a public-opinion shift in favor of stricter gun laws could spur Congress to do something to tighten access to guns. But don't expect Congress to do something big. The party that tends to support looser gun laws controls both chambers, and President Trump has appeared to double down on a pro-gun position to arm some teachers. (Phillips, 2/26)

The Wall Street Journal: Background-Checks Bill Runs Into Hurdles In Congress  
Legislation designed to improve background checks for gun purchases ran into new hurdles Monday, raising doubts about lawmakers' ability to act in the wake of the Florida school shooting. The background-checks bill, sponsored by Sen. John Cornyn (R., Texas), would encourage states and federal agencies, including the military, to submit criminal-conviction records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS. That step has broad bipartisan support. (Peterson and Bender, 2/26)

Politico: Trump Says He Is 'Writing Out' Bump Stocks  
President Donald Trump said Monday he is "writing out" so-called bump stocks, which allow semi-automatic weapons to mimic the firing speed of fully automatic weapons. "Bump stocks, we are writing that out. I am writing that out," he said, addressing a group of state governors at the White House. "I don't care if Congress does it or not, I'm writing it out myself." (Alexander, 2/26)

NPR: Trump Echoes NRA More, After Bipartisan Tone Started The Gun Discussion  
Lawmakers in Washington and Tallahassee have discussed a lot of ideas to reduce school shootings, but on the hardest questions — like what to do about guns — there is just no clear

consensus. There are few signs of clarity from President Trump, who has taken a leading role in the debate without providing strong direction to solve the problem. (Liasson, 2/27)

#### Politico: Trump Won't Meet With AGs On Guns

President Donald Trump said he wanted to meet with state attorneys general to hear their ideas about gun laws — he brought in two anti-gun-regulation Republicans, and the White House says that's enough. Trump won't be meeting with a bipartisan group of AGs in Washington this week for the National Association of Attorneys General conference, as he did last year. (Dovere, 2/26)

#### The New York Times: What Are States Doing About Gun Violence After The Florida Shooting?

It is not just in Florida, where the mass shooting at a high school is prompting lawmakers to take up gun control legislation. The same thing is happening across the country, from Washington to Vermont. What was one of the deadliest school shootings in modern American history prompted Gov. Gina Raimondo of Rhode Island to sign an executive order on Monday to establish a policy to take guns away from people who pose a danger to themselves or others. (Seelye and Bidgood, 2/26)

#### CNN: Florida School Shooting: Florida Lawmakers Consider Gun Measures

Florida lawmakers are mulling a series of proposals in response to the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School that triggered an outcry for accountability and reform. With the last day of the state's legislative session set for March 9, the clock is ticking for lawmakers amid pressure from young survivors of the shooting, who converged in Tallahassee Monday. Hundreds of Floridians, including Stoneman Douglas students, converged on the state Capitol Monday in an event called Rally in Tally calling for stronger gun laws. (Park and Grinberg, 2/27)

#### Stateline: Limits On Federal Gun Research Spur States To Step In

As deaths from mass shootings have mounted across the United States, some states are moving to collect hard data to guide their decisions about guns — even as the federal government has retreated from such research in the face of pressure from pro-gun groups. The New Jersey Legislature, for example, is weighing a measure that would create a gun-violence research center at Rutgers University. The center would be modeled on the new Firearm Violence Prevention Research Center at the University of California at Davis, which launched last summer with \$5 million in state money over five years. (Olllove, 2/27)

Modern Healthcare: Tide May Be Turning To Free Up Funding To Study Gun Violence  
Dr. Marian Betz, a University of Colorado emergency medicine researcher, is studying how to counsel suicidal adults and their families on the best way to store their guns and reduce easy access. The two-year, \$800,000 study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, will evaluate whether such decision-support aids reduce suicide gun deaths. Such federal grants to study gun violence and how to reduce it have been rare since 1996 when a law was enacted barring the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from collecting data to advocate for gun control. Betz was able to get her grant only because in 2013, following the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting in Connecticut, President Barack Obama restarted limited federal funding for such research. (Meyer, 2/26)

The Washington Post: How Laz Ojeda And First Responders May Have Saved The Life Of  
Parkland Student Madeleine Wilford  
As Madeleine Wilford bled from multiple gunshot wounds outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the first responder struggling to keep her alive was faced with a choice. Coral Springs Fire Department Lt. Laz Ojeda could follow guidance to rush the high school student to a hospital 30 miles away, where policy dictates most child patients should go. The second option: Head for the closer, urgent-care-focused Broward Health North, about 12 miles from where a gunman had just killed 17 people on Valentine's Day. (Horton, 2/26)

Health News Florida: Experts: Parents Can Reassure Children After Mass Shootings  
At a discussion on mental health following the recent shooting in South Florida, Kristen Hoffman, a psychologist at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, said kids older than six will have tough questions. ... She says parents should let children lead the conversation with their questions. They can start by asking kids what they know about the incident and what questions they have. (Ochoa, 2/27)

## SUPREME COURT

### **6. Supreme Court Hears Arguments For 'Fair Share' Case That Could Potentially Cripple Unions**

The justices will hear a case on a rule that requires non-union employees at union-affiliated workplaces to pay "fair share" fees. Public sector employees who are not union members are required to pay these fees because the union's collective bargaining is meant to benefit all

employees equally. Nearly 1.5 million workers in health care occupations are represented by unions.

NPR: Supreme Court Hears Fiery Arguments In Case That Could Gut Public Sector Unions  
The Supreme Court heard fiery arguments Monday in a case that could remove a key revenue stream for public sector unions. A sharply divided court could be poised to overturn a 40-year-old Supreme Court decision that would further undermine an already shrinking union movement. Attorneys for Mark Janus, a child support specialist for the state of Illinois, argue that people like Janus, who choose not to join a union, shouldn't be compelled to pay partial union fees. (Totenberg, 2/26)

Modern Healthcare: Healthcare Leaders Worry Supreme Court Case On Union Fees Could Hurt Workplace Harmony And Quality Of Care

Joyce Robertson has been a public health nurse with the Cook County Health & Hospitals System in Chicago for 24 years. She says her labor union, National Nurses United, has repeatedly backed her up when her supervisors have retaliated against her for activism in protecting quality of care. Now she's worried about the outcome of a case being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court Monday that could have enormous ramifications for healthcare organizations. Janus v. AFSCME challenges the right of public-sector unions to collect mandatory fees, known as agency fees, from employees in the bargaining unit to represent them in contract negotiations. Twenty-two states allow such mandatory collections. Fees to cover a union's political activities already are optional under a previous Supreme Court ruling. (Meyer, 2/23)

## VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

### **7. White House Chief Of Staff Tries To Soothe Veterans Groups' Concerns Over Scandal, Infighting At VA**

Leading advocacy groups, including the American Legion, the VFW and the Disabled Veterans of America, are worried about conservatives' interest in shifting toward privatized care for veterans. They see Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin as an ally.

The Washington Post: White House Meets With Veterans Groups Amid Dispute At VA, Tension Over Access To Health Care

White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly told top veterans advocates Monday that President

Trump supports Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, whose future in the administration was called into question this month amid a power struggle among political appointees, according to people who participated in the discussion. The meeting was arranged by Kelly following revelations that Shulkin, the only Obama-era holdover in Trump's Cabinet, had become a target of conservatives hoping to install a new secretary who would be more supportive of their plan to expand health-care options beyond the VA system — a controversial program known as Choice. (Wax-Thibodeaux, 2/26)

## MARKETPLACE

### **8. Buffett Sees Lower Costs, Better Care With New Initiative, But Warns 'Don't Expect Any Miracles Out Of Us'**

"This is not easy," Warren Buffett said about the new health initiative between his company, Amazon and JPMorgan. "If it was easy, it would have been done."

Bloomberg: Buffett-Dimon Health Venture To Go Beyond Just Squeezing The Middlemen  
Health-care spending is taking up an increasing proportion of the U.S. economy, and a goal of the venture is to "at least" halt that, [Warren] Buffett said, adding that he hopes "we could find a way where perhaps better care could be delivered even at somewhat lesser cost." The venture is initially being guided by three senior executives from the companies: Berkshire's Todd Combs; Marvella Sullivan Berchtold, a managing director at JPMorgan who previously worked at drugmaker Novartis AG; and Beth Galetti, a senior vice president for human resources at Amazon. (Tracer and Chiglinsky, 2/26)

In other news from the health industry —

CNBC: Apple Is Launching Medical Clinics To Deliver The 'World's Best Health Care Experience' To Its Employees

Apple is launching a group of health clinics called AC Wellness for its own employees and their families this spring, according to several sources familiar with the company's plans. The company quietly published a website, acwellness.com, with more details about its initiative .... This new primary care group will initially only serve Apple's employees in Santa Clara County, where its headquarters are located. At present, it includes only two clinics. (Farr, 2/27)

Reuters: Fitbit Sees Lower Revenue From New Devices In First Quarter, Shares Fall

Wearable device maker Fitbit Inc on Monday forecast current-quarter profit and revenue below Wall Street estimates and predicted lower revenue from newly launched products such as Ionic and Alta HR. Fitbit shares fell 11.2 percent to \$4.92 in after-market trading after the company's fourth-quarter results also missed estimates due to an about 17 percent drop in sale of its fitness trackers in the holiday quarter. (Khan, 2/26)

## MEDICAID

### **9. Imposing Work Mandate Will Cost Kentucky Nearly \$187M In First 6 Months. But Governor Vows Savings To Come.**

The vast majority of those dollars — more than \$167 million — would be covered by the federal government, Republican Gov. Matt Bevin said. Medicaid news comes out of Virginia, New Mexico, and Florida as well.

#### **Roll Call: Medicaid Changes Require Tens Of Millions In Upfront Costs**

The addition of work requirements and other sweeping changes to Kentucky's Medicaid program could cost nearly \$187 million in the first six months alone to get up and running. Republican Gov. Matt Bevin projects that the program will eventually yield savings but the changes require an upfront investment in administrative expenses. Much of that money is aimed at creating complex electronic systems and other changes needed to track work hours, monthly premium payments and other elements of Kentucky's recently approved plan to revamp the government insurance program for low-income Americans. (Williams, 2/26)

#### **Medpage: Ky. Governor Talks New Medicaid Limits, Opioid Crisis**

When it comes to healthcare issues, Gov. Matt Bevin (R) of Kentucky has a lot on his plate. His state was in the spotlight after it became the first to implement a Medicaid waiver that includes work requirements. Also called "community engagement activities," the new policy means that beneficiaries, with the exception of vulnerable populations, must work, volunteer, engage in job training, go to school, or take care of a family member, in order to receive benefits. (Firth, 2/26)

#### **Kaiser Health News: Refusing To Work For Medicaid May Not Translate To Subsidies For ACA Plan**

In general, people who are eligible for Medicaid — the federal-state health program for low-income people — or employer coverage can't qualify for federal tax credits that help pay for

premiums on plans sold on the health insurance exchanges. This year, Kentucky and Indiana became the first states to receive federal approval to require some Medicaid recipients to put in 80 hours each month at a paid job, school or volunteer work, among other activities, to receive benefits. Nearly a dozen other states have made similar requests. (Andrews, 2/27)

**Modern Healthcare: Virginia Governor Voices Optimism For State Medicaid Expansion**  
Virginia's new Democratic governor, Ralph Northam, hopes his state's Legislature will reach a compromise on Medicaid expansion as their legislative session wraps up over the next few weeks. At the annual winter meeting of the National Governors Association over the weekend, Northam told Modern Healthcare he is optimistic the ongoing negotiations may very well result in a compromise even though the state Senate continues to oppose expansion. (Luthi, 2/26)

**Roanoke Times: Funding To Relieve Pressure On Mental Hospitals Caught Up In Medicaid Budget Battle**  
Early last week, Virginia's public mental hospitals admitted 60 patients in 72 hours, crowding them to 97 percent of capacity with no beds available in two of the state's nine psychiatric facilities of last resort. The situation prompted a public plea in the Virginia Senate by Sen. Creigh Deeds, D-Bath, whose family tragedy underscored the importance of state psychiatric beds when none is available elsewhere. (Martz, 2/26)

**The Santa Fe New Mexican: Judge Dismisses Molina Lawsuit Challenging Medicaid Contracts**  
A judge Monday dismissed a lawsuit seeking to block the administration of Gov. Susana Martinez from proceeding at least temporarily with new contracts for health care companies to serve Medicaid recipients. State District Judge Gregory Shaffer dismissed the case brought by Molina Healthcare of New Mexico, which is challenging its loss of a contract to provide Medicaid managed care after Dec. 31. However, the legal wrestling match over billions of dollars in new Medicaid managed care contracts is far from over. (Cole, 2/26)

**Health News Florida: Health Program Money Won't Hit Projections**  
Gov. Rick Scott last year bragged that the Trump administration had agreed to steer \$1.5 billion in supplemental Medicaid funding to the state, saying at the time the money will "truly improve the quality and access to health care for our most vulnerable populations." But the amount of Medicaid money that will flow to the "Low Income Pool" program this year is \$730.6 million, less than half of the potential amount and about \$60 million less than what Medicaid Director Beth Kidder told lawmakers last fall would be available for the state to spend. (2/25)



## PHARMACEUTICALS

### **10. Disaster-Response Preparedness Bill Could Hold Lots Of Goodies For Pharma**

The Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act is up for renewal this year, and drugmakers are already lining up with their hands out. In other pharmaceutical news: a judge rules that Martin Shkreli can be held responsible for \$10.4 million in losses related to his tenure at Turing Pharmaceuticals; an analysis finds oversight of compounding pharmacies improved; and a tweet sends one biotech company's stocks soaring.

**Stat:** Drug Makers Lobby For Antibiotic Incentives In Pandemic Preparedness Bill

A big legislative package due for renewal later this year could include hundreds of millions of dollars of drug incentives — and the medical community is already jostling to shape its contents. The Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act, a 2013 update of a 2006 law, is slated to end in September. It helps fund disaster-response initiatives such as vaccines for smallpox, diagnostic tests for influenza, and hospital programs to treat victims of a nuclear attack. (Swettitz, 2/27)

**The Hill:** Judge Holds Martin Shkreli Responsible For \$10.4 Million In Losses

A federal judge ruled Monday that former drug company CEO Martin Shkreli will be held responsible for \$10.4 million worth of financial losses related to his time as head of Turing Pharmaceuticals. Judge Kiyo Matsumoto rejected Shkreli's argument that he did not cause any losses for investors because they eventually came out with a profit, Reuters reported. The total losses will likely play a factor in Shkreli's sentencing on March 9. (Samuels, 2/26)

**Stat:** State Oversight Of Compounding Pharmacies Is Better, But Inspections Are Lagging

Amid ongoing scrutiny of compounding pharmacies, a new analysis finds that state oversight has largely improved recently, although one glaring weakness is a cause for concern: Inspections are not being conducted as frequently as in the past. Specifically, 32 states now require compounding pharmacies that make sterile medicines, which are injected or infused into the body, to fully comply with recognized quality standards, according to The Pew Charitable Trusts, a public policy organization. Two years ago, Pew conducted a similar analysis and found only 26 states had the same requirement. (Silverman, 2/26)

Stat: A Biotech Doubled Its Value Off A Tweet About A Curious 'Breakthrough' "A serious breakthrough in the lab," began the tweet worth more than \$8 million to a micro-cap London biotech company. The tweet, posted Sunday and totaling 50 characters, sent HemoGenyx Pharmaceuticals' share price up nearly three-fold on Monday morning, making it the day's best performing company on the London Stock Exchange. (Garde, 2/26)

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

### **11. After 'Especially Difficult' Flu Season, FDA Panel To Weigh Changes To Next Year's Vaccine**

The FDA is looking at why this year's vaccine had a low effectiveness rate. Meanwhile, public officials are trying to make it clear that the vaccine itself can't cause the flu epidemic.

The Hill: FDA Advisory Committee To Analyze Changing Flu Vaccine For Next Year A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory committee will consider whether to change the flu vaccine for next year as the country faces a worse-than-expected flu season. The FDA convenes a panel annually to analyze what will make up next flu season's vaccine. The panel examines the World Health Organization's recommendations to help decide the composition of the next year's shots. (Roubein, 2/26)

The Associated Press: Flu Shot Doesn't Cause Influenza Epidemic You can't get the flu from a flu shot. And public health officials aren't blaming the vaccine for causing this season's nasty epidemic. Some "natural" health websites have misrepresented remarks of a Wisconsin county public health nurse, Anna Treague, who was trying to explain to a local newspaper why this year's influenza vaccine was not as effective as other years. (2/26)

And from the states —

Kansas City Star: Flu Peaks Nationally, But Not In Kansas, CDC Says Don't be lulled by reports that this year's awful flu season is finally on the wane. Here in Kansas City, that's only half true. After weeks of influenza unlike anything the country had seen in almost a decade, the Centers for Disease Control said last week that flu cases may have finally peaked nationally. But while Missouri appears to be joining the rest of the country on the downslope, cases in Kansas are still stubbornly sticking at their highest levels. (Marso, 2/26)

Georgia Health News: It's Not Over, But Rough Flu Season Finally Receding  
Hospitalizations for flu in the eight-county metro Atlanta area were far lower in the week of Feb. 11 through 17 than in the previous week, down to 91 from 165. And the proportion of outpatient visits for flu-like illness in Georgia was 11.9 percent, down from 15.2 percent. (Miller, 2/26)

California Healthline: At Some California Hospitals, Fewer Than Half Of Workers Get The Flu Shot

How well are doctors, nurses and other workers at your local hospital vaccinated against the flu? That depends on the hospital. According to data from the California Department of Public Health, flu vaccination rates among health care staffers at the state's acute care hospitals range from a low of 37 percent to 100 percent. (Wiener, 2/27)

## **12. Bulk Of People Who Use Heroin Are Functioning Addicts. Here's A Look At Their Lives**

CNN talks to people addicted to heroin who are still holding down jobs, paying bills and fooling their families. In other news on the national drug crisis: Ohio sues four major opioid distributors; the judge overseeing hundreds of lawsuits against drug companies wants the DEA to release painkiller data; a look at how much the epidemic has cost New York City; and more.

CNN: Inside The Secret Lives Of Functioning Heroin Addicts

They're not slumped over in alleyways with used needles by their sides. Their dignity, at least from outside appearances, remains intact. They haven't lost everything while chasing an insatiable high. They are functioning heroin addicts -- people who hold down jobs, pay the bills and fool their families. For some, addiction is genetic; they're wired this way. For others, chronic pain and lack of legal opioids landed them here. Or experimentation got them hooked and changed everything. (Ravitz, 2/27)

Reuters: Ohio Accuses Drug Distributors Of Helping Fuel Opioid Epidemic

Ohio on Monday accused four major pharmaceutical distributors of ignoring their responsibilities to ensure that opioids were not being diverted for improper uses, contributing to a drug abuse epidemic in the state. The lawsuit by Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine was filed in a state court against McKesson Corp, Cardinal Health Inc, AmerisourceBergen Corp and

Miami-Luken Inc and marked the second he has pursued over corporations' roles in the opioid crisis. (Raymond, 2/26)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: Ohio Sues Opioid Distributors, Says Negligence Flooded State With Powerful Painkillers

The lawsuit filed in Madison County Common Pleas Court claims drug distributors ignored a responsibility to provide effective controls against opioid diversion. The distributors knew the number of painkillers being brought into Ohio far exceeded the number needed for legitimate medical purposes -- an indication some of the drugs were being used improperly, the lawsuit says. (Madden, 2/26)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: Judge Overseeing Opioid Lawsuits Pushes DEA To Release Drug Data For Settlement Talks

The federal judge overseeing hundreds of lawsuits local governments filed against opioid manufacturers and distributors is pushing the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to release government-collected painkiller data to both sides engaging in settlement talks. U.S. District Judge Dan Polster, during a hearing Monday, ordered the DEA to inform him by March 5 if it will consent to releasing some data from the Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders System, or ARCOS. He also wants to know how long it would take to release the data. (Heisig, 2/26)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: Opioid Addiction Treatment Targeted In Ohio Capital Budget Bill  
Facilities offering addiction treatment programs are among nearly \$20 million in Cuyahoga County projects included in the \$2.62 billion state capital budget bill introduced Monday. The capital budget funds improvements to roads, schools and public buildings, but community projects tend to hog the spotlight despite comprising a small portion of the budget. (Borchardt, 2/26)

The Wall Street Journal: NYC: Opioid Crisis Has Cost City \$500 Million  
Mayor Bill de Blasio offered few specifics when he said New York City litigation would seek about \$500 million from opioid manufacturers and distributors to recover costs associated with abuse of the drugs. The breakdown of that half billion offers a window into how the opioid epidemic has taxed the city, with most of it borne by its financially strapped public-health system. (Raney, 2/26)

Reuters: Doctor Tied To Insys Opioid Kickback Probe Gets Prison Term

A Michigan doctor linked to a federal investigation into allegations that Insys Therapeutics Inc paid kickbacks to medical practitioners to prescribe its flagship opioid product was sentenced on Monday to 32 months in prison. Gavin Awerbuch, 59, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Arthur Tarnow in Detroit after admitting that he wrote prescriptions for Insys' fentanyl-based cancer pain medication Subsys for non-legitimate uses and committed health care fraud. (Friess, 2/26)

Des Moines Register: Opioid Crisis In Iowa: Legislation In House Tackles Problem

The Iowa House passed bipartisan legislation Monday night aimed at battling a crisis in opioid addiction that lawmakers said will help save lives and reduce personal devastation and family tragedies that are striking many communities. House File 2377 would place limits on opioid prescriptions, implement Good Samaritan laws for those who report overdoses and require physicians to file every prescription electronically to avoid circumstances when paper prescriptions are subject to forgeries (Petroski, 2/26)

Richmond Times Dispatch: NGA Picks Virginia To Take Part In Kentucky Learning Lab On Opioid Epidemic

The National Governors Association selected Virginia to participate in a learning lab in Kentucky to better understand how that state is addressing rising rates of infectious diseases such as hepatitis C and HIV caused by the opioid epidemic. ... There were more than 10,000 cases of chronic hepatitis C in Virginia in 2017, which is often a precursor of rising rates of HIV. (Staff, 2/26)

Arizona Republic: State House Bill Proposes Minimum 5-Year Sentence For First-Time Opioid Sellers

In a move reminiscent of "tough-on-crime" drug policy from decades ago, a bill in the Arizona House of Representatives calls for mandatory 5-year-minimum prison sentences for first-time heroin and fentanyl sellers. (Pohl, 2/26)

**13. Nearly Everyone Has Frequent Heart Palpitations, But We Still Don't Know Much About Them**

Those not-quite-right beats that people feel could be absolutely nothing or a sign of a serious problem. In other public health news: autism and ultrasounds, statins, end-of-life discussions, alcohol, standing desks and more.

The Washington Post: The Heart Skips A Beat With Palpitations But It May Not Be Serious  
You might feel them as skipped heartbeats or unusually forceful beats. One friend describes her heart palpitations as a soft fluttering that starts in her chest, moves to her neck and sometimes makes her cough. Another says her heart feels as if it's flipping over in her chest. Mine come in a "pause-thump" pattern that occasionally make me lightheaded. "Heart palpitations" is a catchall term used to describe anything unusual that people feel in the rhythms of their hearts. And pretty much everyone has them at some point, said Gregory Marcus, a cardiac electrophysiologist at the University of California at San Francisco. (Sohn, 2/26)

The Washington Post: Autism Connection To Ultrasound Seems Unlikely, Study Says  
Ultrasounds during pregnancy can be lots of fun, offering peeks at the baby-to-be. But ultrasounds aren't just a way to get Facebook fodder. They are medical procedures that involve sound waves, technology that could, in theory, affect a growing fetus. With that concern in mind, some researchers have wondered if the rising rates of autism diagnoses could have anything to do with the increasing number of ultrasound scans that women receive during pregnancy. (Sanders, 2/26)

The Washington Post: Statins Can Lower Cholesterol But Not Everyone May Need Them  
High cholesterol, a risk factor for heart disease, affects nearly 1 in 5 American women who are at least 40 years old. Although heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in women, there is little agreement on what to do about managing cholesterol. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found that 17.7 percent of women ages 40 to 59 had high cholesterol, as did 17.2 percent of those 60 and older. That's a higher percentage than men in the middle-age cohort (16.5 percent) and dramatically higher than men in the older cohort (6.9 percent). (Adams, 2/26)

The Washington Post: Failing To Tell Patients That Nothing Will Help May Only Make Them Suffer More  
Why is it so hard to tell chronically ill patients that further treatment is futile — that it might erode their quality of life without making a difference in their life expectancy? Surgeons do it indirectly when they declare a patient "inoperable," a determination of futility that people

generally accept, maybe because the harm of ineffective surgery is so obvious that it can't be avoided. (Harrington, 2/26)

San Jose Mercury News: Is Alcohol Better For You Than Exercise?

Want to live longer? Bottoms up. Raise your glass for a recent study that suggested that people who imbibe may well live longer than those who abstain. Indeed, as Time reported, the health benefits of sipping seemed higher than those of exercising. But before you quit the gym and settle in with a nice pinot noir, let's look at the details. (D'Souza, 2/26)

San Jose Mercury News: Standing Desks May Be Hazardous To Your Health

You might want to sit down before you hear the latest research on standing desks. We all know that sitting at a desk for too long can lead to long-term health problems, which has led to many workers switching to standing desks to lose weight, reduce back pain and generally stay more alert. Sitting is the new smoking, right? (D'Souza, 2/26)

Stat: Scientists Reconstruct The Genome Of A Moa, A Bird Extinct For 700 Years

Scientists at Harvard University have assembled the first nearly complete genome of the little bush moa, a flightless bird that went extinct soon after Polynesians settled New Zealand in the late 13th century. The achievement moves the field of extinct genomes closer to the goal of "de-extinction" — bringing vanished species back to life by slipping the genome into the egg of a living species, "Jurassic Park"-like. "De-extinction probability increases with every improvement in ancient DNA analysis," said Stewart Brand, co-founder of the nonprofit conservation group Revive and Restore, which aims to resurrect vanished species including the passenger pigeon and the woolly mammoth, whose genomes have already been mostly pieced together. (Begley, 2/27)

## STATE WATCH

### **14. State Highlights: Son's \$1M Cancer Bill Cost Mass. Teacher Her Job, Complaint Claims; Texas Law To Protect Patients From Surprise Bills Leads To More Confusion**

Media outlets report on news from Massachusetts, Missouri, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, Oregon, California, Colorado, Georgia, Montana, Minnesota, Indiana, Maryland and Virginia.

The Associated Press: Teacher Says She Got Fired Because Son's Cancer Cost \$1M

A teacher who says she was fired from a Massachusetts elementary school because of the high cost of her son's cancer treatment has filed a discrimination complaint. Jacquelyn Silvani tells the Eagle-Tribune that her son's treatment cost Andover Public Schools about \$1 million before she lost her job at West Elementary School in 2016. Her son was 3 at the time. Silvani says she was told that federal funding for the position had been cut, but her complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination says the district later hired someone else. (2/26)

Dallas Morning News: That Freestanding Emergency Room Is Probably Not In-Network, No Matter What The Website Says | Health Care | Dallas News

A Texas law aimed at protecting patients from shocking medical bills after visits to free-standing emergency rooms may not be reducing consumer confusion as intended. The law, which went into effect in September, requires the ERs to say on their websites and at their facilities whether they are in-network or out-of-network for insurance carriers. (Rice, 2/26)

Kansas City Star: Medicare Rankings Show Best, Worst Nursing Homes In Kansas, Missouri  
Fred Rich did not check Medicare's ratings for nursing homes before he picked one in Overland Park last month after breaking his back. The 71-year-old from Kansas City now says that doing so might have saved him a lot of frustration. "The absence of staff, particularly well-trained staff, competent staff, makes it a very difficult place to live," he said. (Ryan and Marso, 2/26)

Chicago Tribune: More Women Seem To Be Crossing State Lines To Have Abortions In Illinois  
More women appear to be traveling from out of state to have an abortion in Illinois even as the total number of terminated pregnancies statewide decreased, according to the most recent figures from the Illinois Department of Public Health. [Alison] Dreith is among the 4,543 women who crossed the state border to terminate a pregnancy in 2016, an increase from the 3,210 abortions provided to out-of-state women reported in the previous year, based on a state report released in December. Overall, abortions in Illinois dropped from 39,856 in 2015 to 38,382 in 2016.

Cleveland Plain Dealer: Anthem: New ER Rule Extends Beyond The Self-Insured  
Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield on Monday disputed the way the Ohio Department of Insurance has publicly characterized the insurer's new practice of denying some emergency-room claims. Anthem spokesman Jeff Blunt said the department inaccurately reported that the practice only



applied to policyholders whose employers were self-insured, according to Capitol Letter, cleveland.com's daily Statehouse tip sheet. (Hancock, 2/26)

The Oregonian: Democrats' Plan To Ask Oregon Voters To Approve Constitutional Right To Health Care Is Dead

Supporters of the drive to enshrine health care as a universal right in Oregon's Constitution acknowledged on Monday that it is dead, at least for this legislative session. Senate Democrats said they lacked the votes to advance the plan by a crucial Tuesday deadline to move it out of committee. ... Democrats in the Oregon House already passed House Joint Resolution 203 to send the health care proposal to the ballot earlier this month. They did so without securing a single Republican vote. (Borrud, 2/26)

LA Daily News: LA County Offers To Pay Off Student Debt For New Doctors — If They Work In Its Jails

On the outside, Richard Brent was a thief and a user. He stole and used meth and heroin, acted tough and aggressive, all of which got him a 90-day sentence to Los Angeles County's Men's Central Jail. But for Dr. Lauren Wolchok, his physician on the inside, Brent is neither criminal nor inmate. For her, he is a person in need of medical care like anyone else. (Abram, 2/26)

Los Angeles Times: Santa Ana River Homeless Camp Cleared After More Than 700 People Relocated

The gates were locked and the Santa Ana River trail was quiet Monday night after a massive push, spanning six days, to relocate more than 700 people to motels and shelters across Orange County. "This was a landmark process with so many different groups combining forces," said Brooke Weitzman, an attorney who sued Orange County on behalf of seven homeless people, alleging that officials' goal to empty the tent city last month violated her clients' civil rights. (Do, 2/26)

Denver Post: Acne Drug Accutane May Be Blamed In Teen's Murder Trial

Attorneys for a Colorado boy accused of a fatal stabbing hinted in court that Accutane — an acne-treatment drug that some have linked to erratic behavior — may be cited by the defense in explaining the teen's alleged actions. Aiden von Grabow, 15, is charged with first-degree murder and 10 other counts in the stabbing death of Makayla Grote, 20, in Longmont, Colo., on Nov. 18, 2017. (Byars, 2/26)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution: Mother Of Missing CDC Researcher Says Family Is Expecting His Return

Two weeks later, the search to find him continues. "We will be here indefinitely until Tim returns. And we're expecting him to return, that's our prayer," Cunningham's mother, Tia-Juana Cunningham, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution on Monday. "There are a lot of people praying for him nationally, and that's how we maintain our spirit and faith." (Stevens, 2/26)

Kaiser Health News: Following The Fire: Montana Scientists Seize Chance To Scrutinize Smoke Exposure

Jean Loesch and her family live in Seeley Lake, Mont., which saw the longest and most intense smoke from Montana's wildfires last summer. Loesch has 10 children, adopted or in her foster care, and they are learning what it's like to have lingering respiratory problems. The smoke from the fires was so thick outside, Loesch said, the family couldn't see the trees across the street, so they stayed inside. It was still really hard to breathe. (Saks, 2/27)

The Star Tribune: Proposed Children's Mental Health Facility In Forest Lake Draws Support At Hearing

In a sign of mounting frustration with Minnesota's mental health care system, more than 100 people packed a Forest Lake City Council hearing Monday night to support a controversial psychiatric residential treatment center for children and adolescents. "We desperately need mental health facilities in this state and around the region," said Marisa Gotsch, whose adult brother never received adequate treatment as a child for his mental illness and is now committed to a state mental hospital. (Serres, 2/26)

The Associated Press: Indiana Close To Becoming 2nd State To Ban Eyeball Tattoos  
Indiana could become the second state to effectively ban the unusual practice of tattooing eyeballs, after a committee on Monday unanimously backed a proposal whose sponsor calls it "the grossest bill of the session." Republican Sen. John Ruckelshaus of Indianapolis says he is not aware of any health-related issues that have arisen in Indiana from the process, in which ink is injected into the eye to make the whites change color. (Chuang, 2/26)

Kansas City Star: Dialysis Clinics In Kansas Get Third Party Accreditation Option  
Dialysis patients in Kansas won't have to wait as long for new clinics to open in the future, after Congress passed a law allowing the clinics to hire private-sector inspectors. But some health care experts are concerned about what that might mean for patient safety. The provision was included in the budget bill President Donald Trump recently signed. It was promoted by U.S.

Rep Lynn Jenkins, a Topeka Republican, and other lawmakers in places where state agencies have fallen behind on the inspections. (Marso, 2/23)

The Baltimore Sun: Chase Brexton Workers Approve First Union Contract, Say Relations With Management Have Improved

Chase Brexton employees voted overwhelmingly Monday to approve their first contract under a union formed nearly 18 months ago amid a raucous dispute with management over long work hours and other issues. Employees said they thought the contract, which includes pay raises and a new scheduling system that allows them to spend more time with patients, addressed many of the grievances they had regarding working conditions. They also said a new CEO and other senior leadership have improved the relationship between management and rank-and-file employees, including doctors, psychologists and nurses. (McDaniels, 2/26)

WBUR: Massachusetts To Move Most Shattuck Hospital Care To South End

The Baker administration plans to purchase the former university hospital on Boston Medical Center's (BMC) campus and transfer patients currently treated at Lemuel Shattuck Hospital on the edge of Franklin Park there in 2021. The main reason: Moving the 260 patient beds will cost about half as much as renovating Shattuck would. (Bebinger, 2/26)

WBUR: Agreeing To Staggered Rollout Of Laws, State Votes To Delay Marijuana Home Delivery, Cafes

The Cannabis Control Commission acquiesced Monday to criticism from Gov. Charlie Baker's administration, the Legislature and others, and agreed to delay the launch of home delivery and social consumption until at least this fall, a move that addressed two of the most commonly-condemned parts of the agency's draft industry regulations. (Young, 2/26)

Richmond Times Dispatch: Lead Tests In School Systems Trigger Action From Officials

The amount of lead from the water fountain in the girls' locker room was nearly three times what the state considers acceptable. That water fountain at Salem Middle School in Chesterfield County has since been replaced, and was rarely used to begin with, Salem Principal LaShante Knight wrote in a letter to parents. ... Other school systems in the Richmond area also are taking a closer look at lead levels in their drinking water after a state law enacted last year required them to create and implement a testing plan. (Remmers and O'Connor, 2/26)

## EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

## **15. Viewpoints: Trumpcare Is Progress? Fewer Insured, Higher Rates, Debt; Amazon's Goals Full Of Conflicts**

Editorial pages highlight these health topics and others.

Los Angeles Times: The Stupidity Of Trumpcare: Government Will Spend \$33 Billion More To Cover 8.9 Million Fewer Americans, As Premiums Soar

Those fiscal geniuses in the White House and Republican-controlled Congress have managed to do the impossible: Their sabotage of the Affordable Care Act will lead to 6.4 million fewer Americans with health insurance, while the federal bill for coverage rises by some \$33 billion per year. Also, by the way, premiums in the individual market will rise by an average of more than 18%. (Michael Hiltzik, 2/26)

The Washington Post: These 'Buffalo' Health Plans Are A Load Of Bull

Last year, much of the country watched with growing fury as Republicans tried to undo President Barack Obama's signature achievement, the Affordable Care Act. Americans stormed town halls. They jammed congressional phone lines. Some got hauled off to jail for acts of civil disobedience. Bill after bill attempting to dismantle Obamacare imploded. By October, it looked like Republicans had given up at last. How wrong that was. In the months since the last Obamacare vote in the Senate, the Trump administration and Republicans on Capitol Hill have engaged in a sneakier, backdoor repeal. (Catherine Rampell, 2/26)

Bloomberg: Warren Buffett's Health Venture Goals Are Easier Set Than Met

The health-care industry may hope a joint venture on its turf by Amazon.com Inc., Berkshire Hathaway Inc., and JPMorgan Chase & Co. (ABC from now on) might be happy just rolling out an app and driving better deals with third-party vendors. But that's wishful thinking, according to Warren Buffett. The Berkshire CEO said in an interview Monday that ABC is looking for "something much bigger than that." (Max Nisen, 2/26)

USA Today: Self-Insured Employers Can Solve Our 'Too Much Medical Care' Crisis

I have full confidence that the collective power of Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway and JPMorgan to negotiate bulk pricing and cut out pharmacy benefit managers will lower the price point of medications, but the real question is: Do people even need these medications? (Dr. Marty Makary, 2/26)

National Review: The Medicare 'Savings' In The New Budget Deal  
Previously, [Medicare Part D] insurers had some incentive to drive drug costs down and keep patients out of the doughnut hole: The insurer still had to pick up a big chunk of the drug costs once the patient fell into the gap. That's a big reason why Part D insurers have aggressively encouraged the use of generic drugs ... That's why, under the current incentive structure, only one in four Part D patients hits the doughnut hole. This new budget provision [in the tax law passed in December] eliminates that incentive. Insurers will now bear just a tiny fraction of the doughnut-hole expenses — so they'll have little reason to keep costs under control. In fact, they may even have a reason to drive costs up: The sooner patients hit that catastrophic-care threshold, the sooner the government steps in and takes over virtually the entire bill. (Kenneth E. Thorpe, 2/23)

St. Louis Post Dispatch: Drug Firms Lead The Way On Pocketing Tax Cuts  
A new survey of U.S. companies from analysts at Morgan Stanley estimates that 43 percent of the savings from the Republican tax cut bill will be paid to investors in the form of higher dividends and stock buybacks. Leading the way are large pharmaceutical companies, which Axios.com reported last week are spending a combined \$50 billion on stock-buyback programs. Only 13 percent of corporate America's tax-cut savings will be passed on to employees, the Morgan Stanley analysts reported. Much of that will go to executives, whose compensation is often tied to stock prices, and they'll benefit as well when share buybacks cause stock prices to jump. (2/26)

Columbus Dispatch: Time To Rein In US Drug Prices  
Compared with the rest of the world, the U.S. market for prescription drugs is rigged against consumers and in favor of the pharmaceutical industry. Unlike other advanced nations, the United States refuses to use its purchasing power to negotiate better prices. When Congress, in 2003, passed the Medicare Part D bill to help senior citizens buy prescriptions, it prohibited the government from negotiating cheaper prices for those drugs. The federal government also sets strict limits on when and how Americans can buy drugs from other developed countries. As a result, prescription-drug prices are artificially higher here. (2/27)

Los Angeles Times: The Homeless In L.A. Are Not Who You Think They Are  
Many people think of homelessness as a problem of substance abusers and mentally ill people, of chronic skid row street-dwellers pushing shopping carts. But increasingly, the crisis in Los Angeles today is about a less visible (but more numerous) group of "economically homeless"

people. These are people who have been driven onto the streets or into shelters by hard times, bad luck and California's irresponsible failure to address its own housing needs. (2/26)

Bloomberg: After Parkland, U.S. Witnesses A Sea Change In Gun Politics

The politics of guns in America seems to be changing for the better. The difference is not the latest gun massacre, which killed 17 students and teachers on Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The difference is the public reaction inspired by the survivors of the shooting. Teenagers demanding reasonable action to protect lives have galvanized a nation. (2/26)

The Wichita Eagle: Gun Violence Protests Will Make America Better

As important as these protests will be to the gun debate, they are crucial for an altogether different reason: These protests mark the emergence of a new generation into the arena of civil discourse. ...For the young students who protest, it will be an opportunity to build not only knowledge, but confidence as well – the confidence that comes with having a voice, and with standing up for what you believe is right, no matter who is yelling back from the other side. (Blake Stuart, 2/26)

Charlotte Observer: Don't Stigmatize Troubled Teens On The Way To Reducing Gun Violence

Most troubled kids don't shoot up schools, even those who post ugly messages on social media. The mentally ill are more likely to hurt themselves than others. Further stigmatizing wayward youngsters will lead to more false positives for law enforcement to investigate. It's akin to looking for a needle in a haystack by first adding more hay. We must try to prevent as many shootings as we can. That starts by not making the task more difficult than it already is. (2/26)

Press Herald: In Opioid Fight, Stigma Remains A Huge Barrier

It's become a grim and frustrating annual tradition, a call-and-response exercise that says a lot about the opioid epidemic. Each year around this time, we report that Maine yet again set a record for fatal drug overdoses in the previous year, and each time we hear from readers who say the dead had it coming. And it's not just those who have the privilege of staying uninformed on addiction, or the luck to be untouched by its devastation. Too many people with the ability to shape and implement policy remain committed to this misguided view of substance abuse. (2/26)

Stat: NIH Needs To Raise The Bar For Funding Alternative Medicine Research

Suppose you needed to have a CT scan for a sudden, severe headache and partial loss of vision

and your doctor asked a nutritionist to read it, rather than a radiologist. Would you trust the diagnosis? Evaluation by a different — and what most would consider a lesser — standard is essentially how a significant amount of research funding is approved by one component of the National Institutes of Health. (Henry I. Miller, 2/26)

The Hill: Sugary Drinks Are Causing Chronic Illnesses — We Need Policy Changes To Combat Them

When we think of the major killers of Americans, we naturally gravitate towards drugs and violence as the major culprits. These are often graphic deaths that occur abruptly. Too often we neglect chronic diseases, which silently claim far more lives. Heart disease is the leading killer in the United States, followed closely by other related illnesses such as stroke. As a physician, I am used to treating conditions that contribute to heart disease and stroke in adults — high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity. Now, I am seeing children sickened by the same diseases. (Dr. Leana S. Wen, 2/26)

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## First Edition

**Tuesday, February 27, 2018**

Visit Kaiser Health News for the latest headlines

Today's early morning highlights from the major news organizations.

### **Kaiser Health News: Refusing To Work For Medicaid May Not Translate To Subsidies For ACA Plan**

In general, people who are eligible for Medicaid — the federal-state health program for low-income people — or employer coverage can't qualify for federal tax credits that help pay for premiums on plans sold on the health insurance exchanges. This year, Kentucky and Indiana became the first states to receive federal approval to require some Medicaid recipients to put in



80 hours each month at a paid job, school or volunteer work, among other activities, to receive benefits. Nearly a dozen other states have made similar requests. (Andrews, 2/27)

### **Kaiser Health News: Following The Fire: Montana Scientists Seize Chance To Scrutinize Smoke Exposure**

Jean Loesch and her family live in Seeley Lake, Mont., which saw the longest and most intense smoke from Montana's wildfires last summer. Loesch has 10 children, adopted or in her foster care, and they are learning what it's like to have lingering respiratory problems. The smoke from the fires was so thick outside, Loesch said, the family couldn't see the trees across the street, so they stayed inside. It was still really hard to breathe. (Saks, 2/27)

### **California Healthline: At Some California Hospitals, Fewer Than Half Of Workers Get The Flu Shot**

How well are doctors, nurses and other workers at your local hospital vaccinated against the flu? That depends on the hospital. According to data from the California Department of Public Health, flu vaccination rates among health care staffers at the state's acute care hospitals range from a low of 37 percent to 100 percent. (Wiener, 2/27)

### **Reuters: Twenty States Sue Federal Government, Seeking End To Obamacare**

A coalition of 20 U.S. states sued the federal government on Monday over Obamacare, claiming the law was no longer constitutional after the repeal last year of its requirement that people have health insurance or pay a fine. Led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel, the lawsuit said that without the individual mandate, which was eliminated as part of the Republican tax law signed by President Donald Trump in December, Obamacare was unlawful. (Beech, 2/27)

### **Politico: 20 States Sue Over Obamacare Mandate — Again**

The GOP tax law "eliminated the tax penalty of the ACA, without eliminating the mandate itself," the states argue in a complaint filed today in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of Texas. "What remains, then, is the individual mandate, without any accompanying exercise of Congress's taxing power, which the Supreme Court already held that Congress has no authority to enact." The Supreme Court in 2012 upheld Obamacare's individual mandate in one of the highest-profile court cases in years. The justices did not agree then with the Obama administration's main argument that the mandate penalty was valid under the Commerce Clause. But the justices did say that the mandate was a constitutional tax. (Haberkorn, 2/26)

### **The Hill: Iowa Lawmakers Move To Allow Health Plans That Skirt ObamaCare Rules**

State lawmakers in Iowa are moving to allow the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation to offer health insurance plans that don't comply with ObamaCare protections. Two bills moving through the state legislature aim to provide Farm Bureau members with plans that cost much less than plans that are currently available on Iowa's individual market. (Weixel, 2/26)

### **The Associated Press: Administration Considers Expanding Mental Health Treatment**

Amid the outcry over the Florida school shootings, the Trump administration says it is "actively exploring" ways to help states expand inpatient mental health treatment using Medicaid funds. President Donald Trump again brought up the issue of mental hospitals in a meeting with governors on Monday, invoking a time when states maintained facilities for mentally ill and developmentally disabled people. "In the old days, you would put him into a mental institution," Trump said, apparently referring to alleged shooter Nikolas Cruz, whose troubling behavior prompted people close to him to plead for help from authorities, without success. (2/27)

### **Los Angeles Times: What The Florida School Shooting Reveals About The Gaps In Our Mental Health System**

After Adam Lanza burst into Sandy Hook Elementary School and gunned down 20 students and six educators, Connecticut's Office of the Child Advocate tapped Julian Ford to help make sense of the shooting. A professor of psychiatry at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and a practicing psychologist for 35 years, Ford served on an expert panel that conducted a detailed review of Lanza's brief life to look for "any warning signs, red flags, or other lessons that could be learned." The resulting report painted a picture of an odd, sensitive child with significant communication difficulties who became an anxious and withdrawn adolescent. ... At every turn, the report saw missed opportunities to treat Lanza's multiple interpersonal and mental health difficulties ... and to draw him out of his profound isolation. (Healy, 2/26)

### **The Washington Post: What Will Congress Realistically Do On Guns After The Florida Shooting?**

Congress is back this week for the first time since the Parkland, Fla., high school massacre. Sustained national media attention on the shooting, emotional confrontations between politicians and survivors and their families, as well as a public-opinion shift in favor of stricter gun laws could spur Congress to do something to tighten access to guns. But don't expect Congress to do something big. The party that tends to support looser gun laws controls both chambers, and

President Trump has appeared to double down on a pro-gun position to arm some teachers. (Phillips, 2/26)

### **The Wall Street Journal: Background-Checks Bill Runs Into Hurdles In Congress**

Legislation designed to improve background checks for gun purchases ran into new hurdles Monday, raising doubts about lawmakers' ability to act in the wake of the Florida school shooting. The background-checks bill, sponsored by Sen. John Cornyn (R., Texas), would encourage states and federal agencies, including the military, to submit criminal-conviction records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS. That step has broad bipartisan support. (Peterson and Bender, 2/26)

### **Politico: Trump Says He Is 'Writing Out' Bump Stocks**

President Donald Trump said Monday he is "writing out" so-called bump stocks, which allow semi-automatic weapons to mimic the firing speed of fully automatic weapons. "Bump stocks, we are writing that out. I am writing that out," he said, addressing a group of state governors at the White House. "I don't care if Congress does it or not, I'm writing it out myself." (Alexander, 2/26)

### **NPR: Trump Echoes NRA More, After Bipartisan Tone Started The Gun Discussion**

Lawmakers in Washington and Tallahassee have discussed a lot of ideas to reduce school shootings, but on the hardest questions — like what to do about guns — there is just no clear consensus. There are few signs of clarity from President Trump, who has taken a leading role in the debate without providing strong direction to solve the problem. (Liasson, 2/27)

### **Politico: Trump Won't Meet With AGs On Guns**

President Donald Trump said he wanted to meet with state attorneys general to hear their ideas about gun laws — he brought in two anti-gun-regulation Republicans, and the White House says that's enough. Trump won't be meeting with a bipartisan group of AGs in Washington this week for the National Association of Attorneys General conference, as he did last year. (Dovere, 2/26)

### **The New York Times: What Are States Doing About Gun Violence After The Florida Shooting?**

It is not just in Florida, where the mass shooting at a high school is prompting lawmakers to take up gun control legislation. The same thing is happening across the country, from Washington to Vermont. What was one of the deadliest school shootings in modern American history prompted Gov. Gina Raimondo of Rhode Island to sign an executive order on Monday to establish a

policy to take guns away from people who pose a danger to themselves or others. (Seelye and Bidgood, 2/26)

#### **Stateline: Limits On Federal Gun Research Spur States To Step In**

As deaths from mass shootings have mounted across the United States, some states are moving to collect hard data to guide their decisions about guns — even as the federal government has retreated from such research in the face of pressure from pro-gun groups. The New Jersey Legislature, for example, is weighing a measure that would create a gun-violence research center at Rutgers University. The center would be modeled on the new Firearm Violence Prevention Research Center at the University of California at Davis, which launched last summer with \$5 million in state money over five years. (Ollove, 2/27)

#### **Modern Healthcare: Tide May Be Turning To Free Up Funding To Study Gun Violence**

Dr. Marian Betz, a University of Colorado emergency medicine researcher, is studying how to counsel suicidal adults and their families on the best way to store their guns and reduce easy access. The two-year, \$800,000 study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, will evaluate whether such decision-support aids reduce suicide gun deaths. Such federal grants to study gun violence and how to reduce it have been rare since 1996 when a law was enacted barring the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from collecting data to advocate for gun control. Betz was able to get her grant only because in 2013, following the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting in Connecticut, President Barack Obama restarted limited federal funding for such research. (Meyer, 2/26)

#### **The Washington Post: How Laz Ojeda And First Responders May Have Saved The Life Of Parkland Student Madeleine Wilford**

As Madeleine Wilford bled from multiple gunshot wounds outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the first responder struggling to keep her alive was faced with a choice. Coral Springs Fire Department Lt. Laz Ojeda could follow guidance to rush the high school student to a hospital 30 miles away, where policy dictates most child patients should go. The second option: Head for the closer, urgent-care-focused Broward Health North, about 12 miles from where a gunman had just killed 17 people on Valentine's Day. (Horton, 2/26)

#### **The Washington Post: White House Meets With Veterans Groups Amid Dispute At VA, Tension Over Access To Health Care**

White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly told top veterans advocates Monday that President Trump supports Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, whose future in the administration

was called into question this month amid a power struggle among political appointees, according to people who participated in the discussion. The meeting was arranged by Kelly following revelations that Shulkin, the only Obama-era holdover in Trump's Cabinet, had become a target of conservatives hoping to install a new secretary who would be more supportive of their plan to expand health-care options beyond the VA system — a controversial program known as Choice. (Wax-Thibodeaux, 2/26)

### **NPR: Supreme Court Hears Fiery Arguments In Case That Could Gut Public Sector Unions**

The Supreme Court heard fiery arguments Monday in a case that could remove a key revenue stream for public sector unions. A sharply divided court could be poised to overturn a 40-year-old Supreme Court decision that would further undermine an already shrinking union movement. Attorneys for Mark Janus, a child support specialist for the state of Illinois, argue that people like Janus, who choose not to join a union, shouldn't be compelled to pay partial union fees. (Totenberg, 2/26)

### **Modern Healthcare: Healthcare Leaders Worry Supreme Court Case On Union Fees Could Hurt Workplace Harmony And Quality Of Care**

Joyce Robertson has been a public health nurse with the Cook County Health & Hospitals System in Chicago for 24 years. She says her labor union, National Nurses United, has repeatedly backed her up when her supervisors have retaliated against her for activism in protecting quality of care. Now she's worried about the outcome of a case being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court Monday that could have enormous ramifications for healthcare organizations. Janus v. AFSCME challenges the right of public-sector unions to collect mandatory fees, known as agency fees, from employees in the bargaining unit to represent them in contract negotiations. Twenty-two states allow such mandatory collections. Fees to cover a union's political activities already are optional under a previous Supreme Court ruling. (Meyer, 2/23)

### **The Associated Press: Teacher Says She Got Fired Because Son's Cancer Cost \$1M**

A teacher who says she was fired from a Massachusetts elementary school because of the high cost of her son's cancer treatment has filed a discrimination complaint. Jacquelyn Silvani tells the Eagle-Tribune that her son's treatment cost Andover Public Schools about \$1 million before she lost her job at West Elementary School in 2016. Her son was 3 at the time. Silvani says she was told that federal funding for the position had been cut, but her complaint with the

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination says the district later hired someone else. (2/26)

### **The Associated Press: Flu Shot Doesn't Cause Influenza Epidemic**

You can't get the flu from a flu shot. And public health officials aren't blaming the vaccine for causing this season's nasty epidemic. Some "natural" health websites have misrepresented remarks of a Wisconsin county public health nurse, Anna Treague, who was trying to explain to a local newspaper why this year's influenza vaccine was not as effective as other years. (2/26)

### **The Hill: FDA Advisory Committee To Analyze Changing Flu Vaccine For Next Year**

A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory committee will consider whether to change the flu vaccine for next year as the country faces a worse-than-expected flu season. The FDA convenes a panel annually to analyze what will make up next flu season's vaccine. The panel examines the World Health Organization's recommendations to help decide the composition of the next year's shots. (Roubein, 2/26)

### **Stat: Drug Makers Lobby For Antibiotic Incentives In Pandemic Preparedness Bill**

A big legislative package due for renewal later this year could include hundreds of millions of dollars of drug incentives — and the medical community is already jostling to shape its contents. The Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act, a 2013 update of a 2006 law, is slated to end in September. It helps fund disaster-response initiatives such as vaccines for smallpox, diagnostic tests for influenza, and hospital programs to treat victims of a nuclear attack. (Sweltitz, 2/27)

### **The Hill: Judge Holds Martin Shkreli Responsible For \$10.4 Million In Losses**

A federal judge ruled Monday that former drug company CEO Martin Shkreli will be held responsible for \$10.4 million worth of financial losses related to his time as head of Turing Pharmaceuticals. Judge Kiyo Matsumoto rejected Shkreli's argument that he did not cause any losses for investors because they eventually came out with a profit, Reuters reported. The total losses will likely play a factor in Shkreli's sentencing on March 9. (Samuels, 2/26)

### **Stat: State Oversight Of Compounding Pharmacies Is Better, But Inspections Are Lagging**

Amid ongoing scrutiny of compounding pharmacies, a new analysis finds that state oversight has largely improved recently, although one glaring weakness is a cause for concern: Inspections are not being conducted as frequently as in the past. Specifically, 32 states now require compounding pharmacies that make sterile medicines, which are injected or infused into

the body, to fully comply with recognized quality standards, according to The Pew Charitable Trusts, a public policy organization. Two years ago, Pew conducted a similar analysis and found only 26 states had the same requirement. (Silverman, 2/26)

**Stat: A Biotech Doubled Its Value Off A Tweet About A Curious 'Breakthrough'**

"A serious breakthrough in the lab," began the tweet worth more than \$8 million to a micro-cap London biotech company. The tweet, posted Sunday and totaling 50 characters, sent HemoGenyx Pharmaceuticals' share price up nearly three-fold on Monday morning, making it the day's best performing company on the London Stock Exchange. (Garde, 2/26)

**Reuters: Ohio Accuses Drug Distributors Of Helping Fuel Opioid Epidemic**

Ohio on Monday accused four major pharmaceutical distributors of ignoring their responsibilities to ensure that opioids were not being diverted for improper uses, contributing to a drug abuse epidemic in the state. The lawsuit by Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine was filed in a state court against McKesson Corp, Cardinal Health Inc, AmerisourceBergen Corp and Miami-Luken Inc and marked the second he has pursued over corporations' roles in the opioid crisis. (Raymond, 2/26)

**The Wall Street Journal: NYC: Opioid Crisis Has Cost City \$500 Million**

Mayor Bill de Blasio offered few specifics when he said New York City litigation would seek about \$500 million from opioid manufacturers and distributors to recover costs associated with abuse of the drugs. The breakdown of that half billion offers a window into how the opioid epidemic has taxed the city, with most of it borne by its financially strapped public-health system. (Ramey, 2/26)

**Reuters: Doctor Tied To Insys Opioid Kickback Probe Gets Prison Term**

A Michigan doctor linked to a federal investigation into allegations that Insys Therapeutics Inc paid kickbacks to medical practitioners to prescribe its flagship opioid product was sentenced on Monday to 32 months in prison. Gavin Awerbuch, 59, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Arthur Tarnow in Detroit after admitting that he wrote prescriptions for Insys' fentanyl-based cancer pain medication Subsys for non-legitimate uses and committed health care fraud. (Friess, 2/26)

**Reuters: Fitbit Sees Lower Revenue From New Devices In First Quarter, Shares Fall**

Wearable device maker Fitbit Inc on Monday forecast current-quarter profit and revenue below Wall Street estimates and predicted lower revenue from newly launched products such as Ionic

and Alta HR. Fitbit shares fell 11.2 percent to \$4.92 in after-market trading after the company's fourth-quarter results also missed estimates due to an about 17 percent drop in sale of its fitness trackers in the holiday quarter. (Khan, 2/26)

**The Washington Post: The Heart Skips A Beat With Palpitations But It May Not Be Serious**

You might feel them as skipped heartbeats or unusually forceful beats. One friend describes her heart palpitations as a soft fluttering that starts in her chest, moves to her neck and sometimes makes her cough. Another says her heart feels as if it's flipping over in her chest. Mine come in a "pause-thump" pattern that occasionally make me lightheaded. "Heart palpitations" is a catchall term used to describe anything unusual that people feel in the rhythms of their hearts. And pretty much everyone has them at some point, said Gregory Marcus, a cardiac electrophysiologist at the University of California at San Francisco. (Sohn, 2/26)

**The Washington Post: Autism Connection To Ultrasound Seems Unlikely, Study Says**

Ultrasounds during pregnancy can be lots of fun, offering peeks at the baby-to-be. But ultrasounds aren't just a way to get Facebook fodder. They are medical procedures that involve sound waves, technology that could, in theory, affect a growing fetus. With that concern in mind, some researchers have wondered if the rising rates of autism diagnoses could have anything to do with the increasing number of ultrasound scans that women receive during pregnancy. (Sanders, 2/26)

**The Washington Post: Statins Can Lower Cholesterol But Not Everyone May Need Them**  
High cholesterol, a risk factor for heart disease, affects nearly 1 in 5 American women who are at least 40 years old. Although heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in women, there is little agreement on what to do about managing cholesterol. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found that 17.7 percent of women ages 40 to 59 had high cholesterol, as did 17.2 percent of those 60 and older. That's a higher percentage than men in the middle-age cohort (16.5 percent) and dramatically higher than men in the older cohort (6.9 percent). (Adams, 2/26)

**The Washington Post: Chronically Ill Patients Often Aren't Told Nothing Will Help, Making Them Suffer More**

Why is it so hard to tell chronically ill patients that further treatment is futile — that it might erode their quality of life without making a difference in their life expectancy? Surgeons do it indirectly when they declare a patient "inoperable," a determination of futility that people



generally accept, maybe because the harm of ineffective surgery is so obvious that it can't be avoided. (Harrington, 2/26)

#### **Stat: Scientists Reconstruct The Genome Of A Moa, A Bird Extinct For 700 Years**

Scientists at Harvard University have assembled the first nearly complete genome of the little bush moa, a flightless bird that went extinct soon after Polynesians settled New Zealand in the late 13th century. The achievement moves the field of extinct genomes closer to the goal of "de-extinction" — bringing vanished species back to life by slipping the genome into the egg of a living species, "Jurassic Park"-like. "De-extinction probability increases with every improvement in ancient DNA analysis," said Stewart Brand, co-founder of the nonprofit conservation group Revive and Restore, which aims to resurrect vanished species including the passenger pigeon and the woolly mammoth, whose genomes have already been mostly pieced together. (Begley, 2/27)

#### **The Associated Press: Indiana Close To Becoming 2nd State To Ban Eyeball Tattoos**

Indiana could become the second state to effectively ban the unusual practice of tattooing eyeballs, after a committee on Monday unanimously backed a proposal whose sponsor calls it "the grossest bill of the session." Republican Sen. John Ruckelshaus of Indianapolis says he is not aware of any health-related issues that have arisen in Indiana from the process, in which ink is injected into the eye to make the whites change color. (Chuang, 2/26)

#### **Los Angeles Times: Santa Ana River Homeless Camp Cleared After More Than 700 People Relocated**

The gates were locked and the Santa Ana River trail was quiet Monday night after a massive push, spanning six days, to relocate more than 700 people to motels and shelters across Orange County. "This was a landmark process with so many different groups combining forces," said Brooke Weitzman, an attorney who sued Orange County on behalf of seven homeless people, alleging that officials' goal to empty the tent city last month violated her clients' civil rights. (Do, 2/26)

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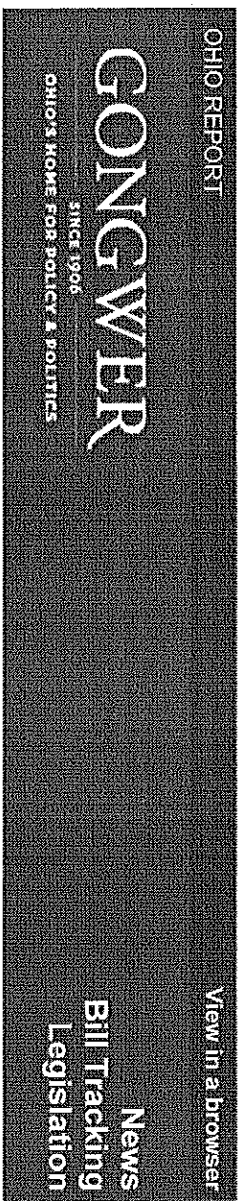
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**Cardinal Health Among Drug Distributors Targeted In Latest DeWine  
Opioid Suit**

**Nearly \$29M In State IT Funding Clears Controlling Board**

Adult Charge Stemming From Juvenile Conviction Challenged At High Court

Ohio Groups Debate Trump's Short-Term Health Plan Proposal

Travel Trailer Maker Tops List Of Tax Credits Issued By State Panel

Kasich Declares Emergency As Flood Risks Continue

Cyberattack Temporarily Shuts Down State Websites, Phones

Environmental Group Calls For Setback, Chemical Reporting Changes Following Well Fire

Schiavoni, Williams Plan Firearm Removal Bill; Yost Unveils School Safety Plan; High Court Hears Janus Case; Kucinich Continues Gun Push...

Governor's Appointments

Supplemental Event Planner

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## Day Planner

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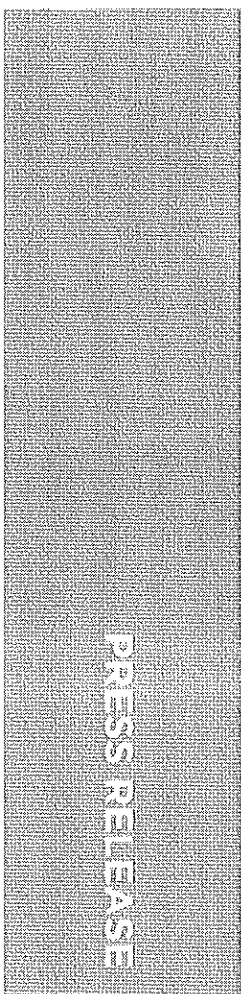
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**To:** Alexander, Steven  
**Subject:** RELEASE: Advocates call for policies that support Ohio's workers

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## Advocates call for policies that support Ohio's workers

**Contact:** Hannah Halbert  
**614.221.4505**

Later this month, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear Janus v. AFSCME, which threatens the ability of unions to collect fair share fees. Ohio legislators also recently unveiled a state of proposals designed to give more power to corporations at the expense of workers, including so-called "right to work" legislation, which could greatly reduce the power of Ohio's unions. With working people facing threats at state and national levels, Policy Matters Ohio joined ProgressOhio to unveil a new policy brief, "A way forward: 10 ways to support Ohio's working people."

"So-called 'Right-to-Work' legislation and related judicial attacks like the pending Janus case don't address these real struggles of working people," Policy Matters Researcher Hannah Halbert said. "Unionized workers in Ohio make \$4 an hour more than their non-union counterparts, \$8,000 more a year for full-time work. Union workers are more likely to have pensions and paid sick days, and less likely to be treated

unfairly at work or experience harassment or workplace injuries."

Cincinnati fire fighter and Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters Communications Director Doug Stern said so-called right-to-work laws not only chip away at the fabric of unions, but can make communities less safe.

"Attacks like these on working people and unions are attacks on fire fighters, police officers and all first responders, he said. "Our fire fighters and police officers deserve the right to collectively bargain so that we can effectively advocate for the training and equipment that keep our communities safe."

For decades, state and federal policymakers have chipped away at worker protections. As a result, Ohio's job growth has been weak and the state's wealthiest 1 percent earned more than 19 times the average of the bottom 99 percent of earners combined.

"The decline of unions has significantly contributed to the decline of the middle class as wages have remained stagnant and workers are getting a smaller and smaller share of income," said Wright State University Economics Professor Rudy Fichtenbaum. "Attacks on unions are not about increasing job growth; they're about corporations and the political elite gaining power over workers."

Policy Matters calls for the policymakers to protect workers' right to organize, as well as strengthen the public sector, raise the minimum wage, restore the 40-hour work week, fix Ohio's broken unemployment compensation system and more.

[See the press conference on Facebook Live.](#)

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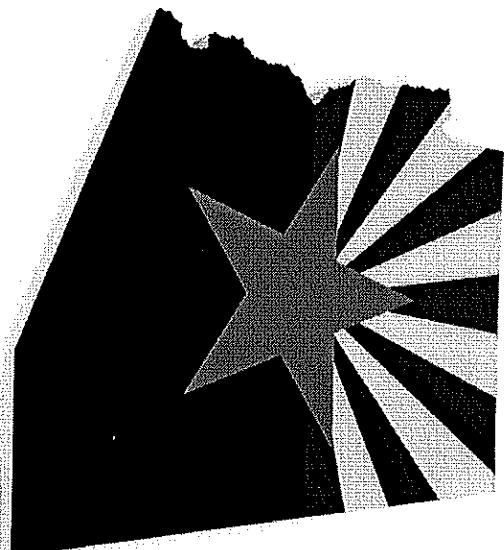


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**Sent:** Thursday, June 09, 2016 10:00 PM  
**To:** Alexander, Steven  
**Subject:** Arizona Adopts ODG

Arizona adopts ODG statewide



# Arizona adopts ODG

The Governor's Regulatory Review Council voted affirmatively Wednesday to implement Industrial Commission rules adopting ODG and the ODG Drug Formulary effective 10/01/16. The rules apply to chronic pain and opioids for all stages of pain.



For those who remember the debate that began four years ago, this marks another victory for evidence-based medicine, putting quality care and return-to-health ahead of special interests.

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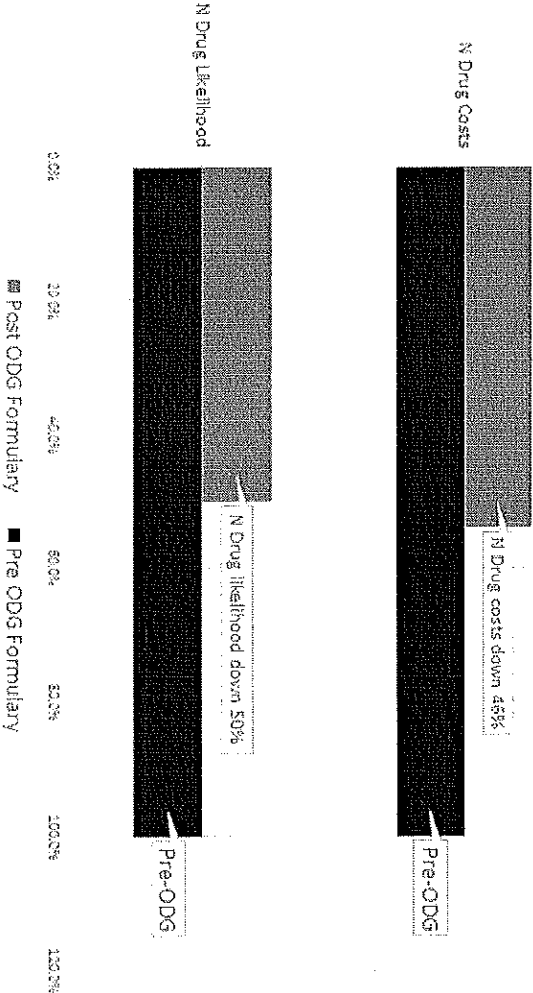
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Subject: Another New Study on ODG Outcomes

More evidence on the ODG solution to the opioid epidemic-

ODG Formulary Study



# Real-world solutions

Check out another new, independent study on ODG outcomes from the [Economics Letters](#).

Titled "The impact of a closed formulary on prescribing patterns in the treatment of injured workers", the study reviews data from the Texas adoption of the ODG Drug Formulary.

The analysis confirms the overwhelmingly positive experience reported by stakeholders in ODG states, tackling the opioid and prescription drug epidemic in America, one state at a time.

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**Subject:** Report Shows N-Drugs Plummet in Texas Post-ODG Formulary

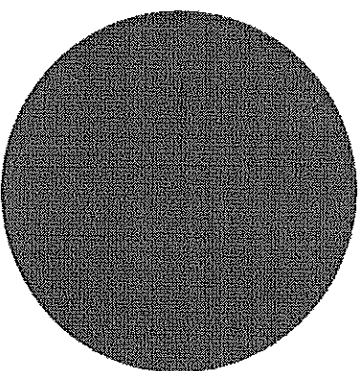
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Number of N-Drug Prescriptions per Year 2009 versus 2015

Pre-ODG Formulary

Post-ODG Formulary



335,077

26,701

The combined and powerful effect of the ODG treatment guidelines and ODG Drug Formulary.



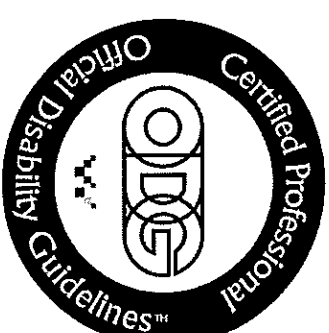
## Practice, not theory

A new report from the Texas Department of Insurance shows a dramatic decline in N Drug use of more than 92% over six years, with total prescriptions including approved drugs down 26%. Stakeholders rightly attribute it to the combined and powerful effect of using the ODG treatment guidelines in concert with the ODG Formulary.

## Well said

"The ODG Drug Formulary has been a great success," said Steve Nichols of the Insurance Council of Texas. Nichols said the data reflects the combined impact of the ODG Formulary and the Texas implementation of the ODG treatment guidelines in 2007. "The guidelines are playing a big role on top of the drug formulary," Nichols said.

Rod Bordelon, Texas Commissioner from 2008 to 2014, said an advantage of having the ODG treatment guidelines in place first was that the system was set up for preauthorization. "By the



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Alexander, Steven  
ODG University: ODG Return-to-Work Mea

ODG University: ODG Return-to-Work Measures

## Return-To-Work Guidelines: Then and Now



# Units of measure

What makes a good medical claim, objectively?

Easy. The best (objective) measure of post-injury success is disability duration. Make this your focus, and the rest takes care of itself.

Claim risk, excessive or inappropriate utilization of medical services, inadequate reserves, opioid dependence, high costs, poor health outcomes, litigation, and too much spent on managed care services, all have one simple thing in common: delayed recovery.

The trigger for all is missing a RTW benchmark, and then it's off to the races. Meet or beat the benchmark, and 99 times out of 100, you won't need to worry about anything else. The rest will take care of itself.

So what is the benchmark? And how can you keep your vendors, clients, claimants, providers and systems all informed, focused and alert?

Simple. Connect through ODG. Export and share content, or better yet, use an automated feed from the ODG application programming interface.

Watch the video above, then press connect. We will make your RTW goals our unrelenting focus, assigning a highly trained ODG consultant.

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Phil LeFevre <lefevre@worklossdata.com>  
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Alexander, Steven  
NCCI Research on Prescription Drugs and the ODG Solution

New research from NCCI shows utilization and savings by state-

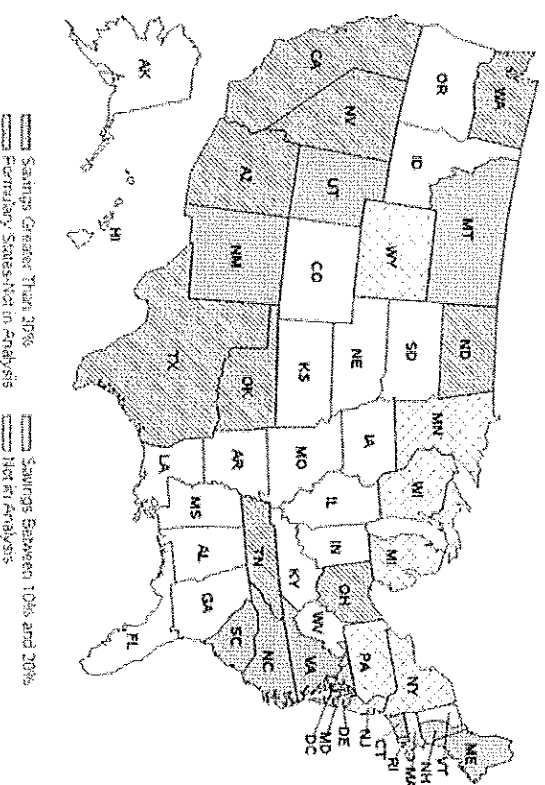
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## NCCI's 2016 Prescription Drug Update



# ODG Formulary Could Reduce WC Rx Costs by 10% or More

Potential Rx Cost Savings From ODG Formulary



NCJ analysis based on Medical Data Call for prescription drugs with a National Drug Code provided in Service Year 2014. The ODG Drug Formulary is a product of the Work Loss Data Institute. Data used with permission. Formulary States—Not in Analysis are states with a formulary as of July 1, 2016.

## Proven solutions

"A closed formulary is a list of drugs with an associated reimbursement status. For example, the Official Disability Guidelines (ODG)—adopted by Texas in 2011, Oklahoma in 2014, and Arizona and Tennessee in 2016—has statuses "Y" for preauthorized for use and "N" for not allowed or needs authorization. On average, 24% of drug costs and 17% of prescriptions in a service year are for N drugs. The intent of formularies is to use evidence-based guidelines to reduce

over-prescribing (of opioids, in particular), to maximize healing, to improve return-to-work outcomes, and to contain drug costs. Exhibit 4 shows NCCI's estimates for potential drug cost savings from the ODG formulary for a number of states. In many states, the introduction of the ODG formulary has the potential to reduce W/C prescription drug costs by 10% or more. As evidence-based guidelines tend to be more restrictive when dealing with opioids, states with higher opioid use tend to produce the largest estimated savings."

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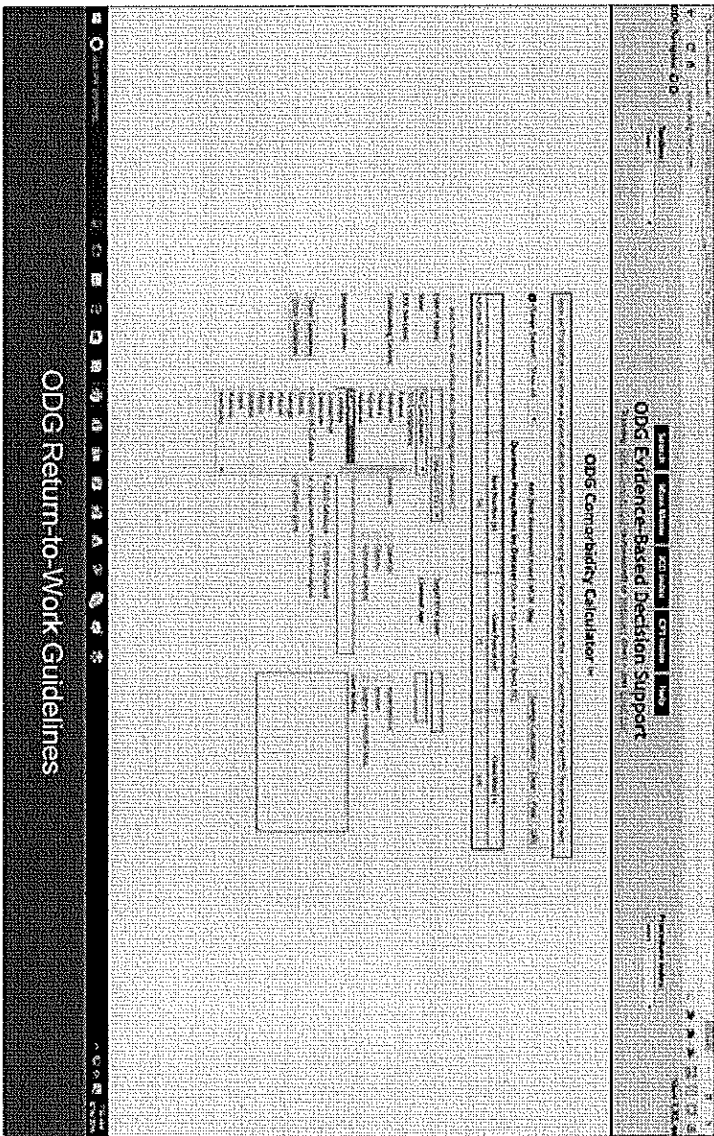
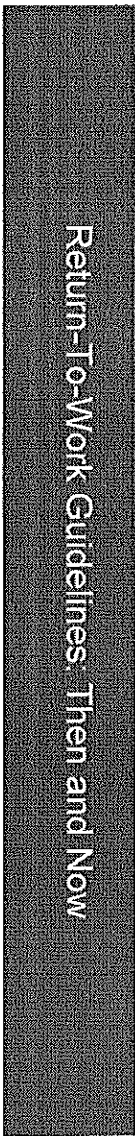
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Another short clip from ODG University-



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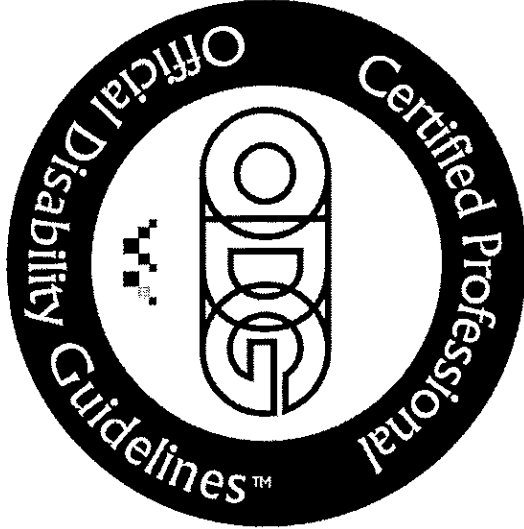
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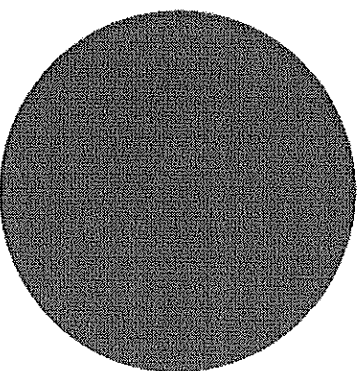


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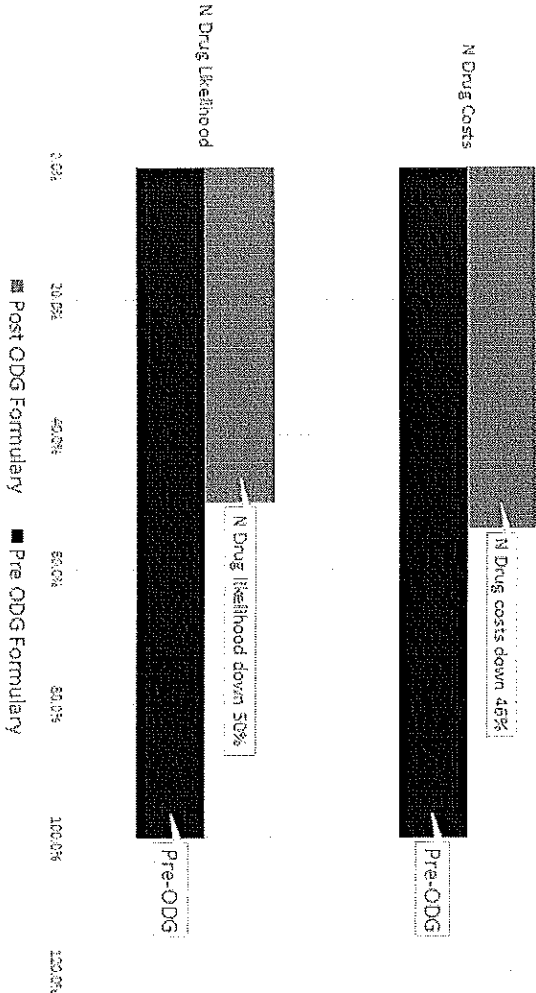
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Sent: Monday, June 20, 2016 4:54 PM  
To: Alexander, Steven  
Subject: Another New Study on ODG Outcomes

More evidence on the ODG solution to the opioid epidemic-

# ODG Formulary Study



# Real-world solutions

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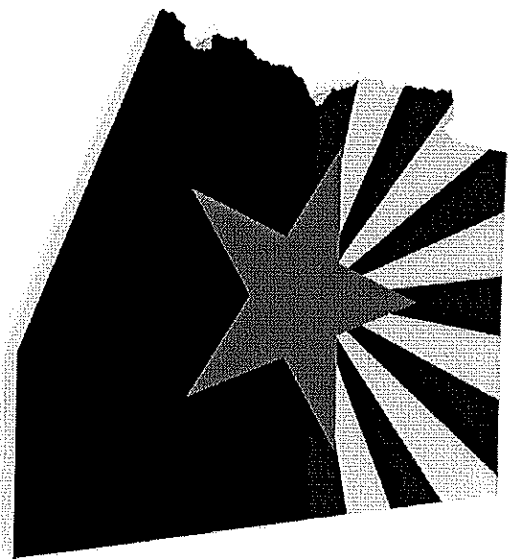
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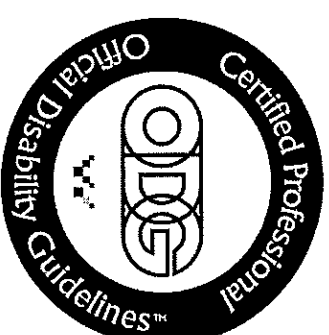
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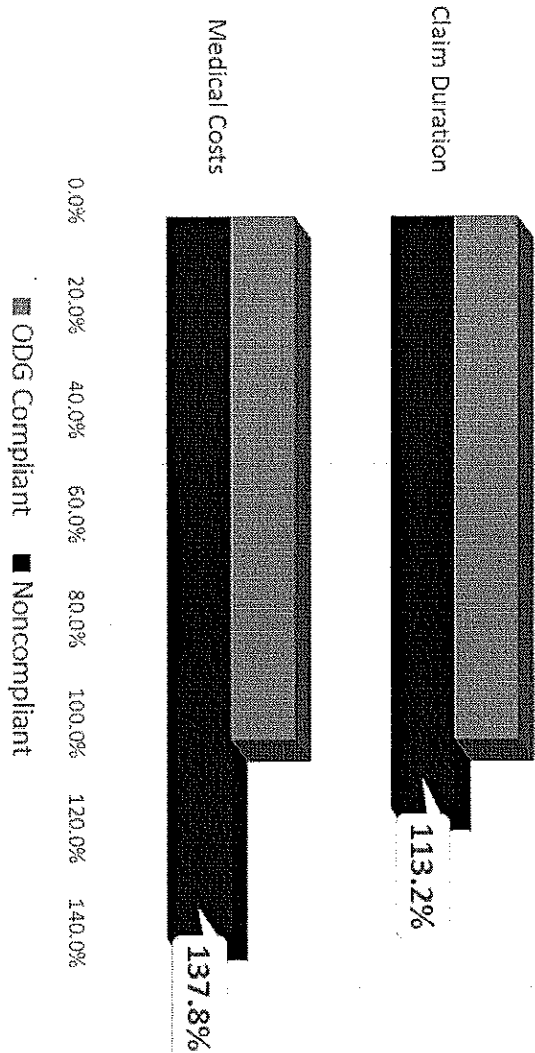
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Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2016 9:20 AM  
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Subject: New Study Results on ODG Outcomes

Complexity-adjusted outcomes from ODG compliance:

ODG Compliance on Claim Outcomes



# Show me the Data

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The "before and afters." In a word: nice.

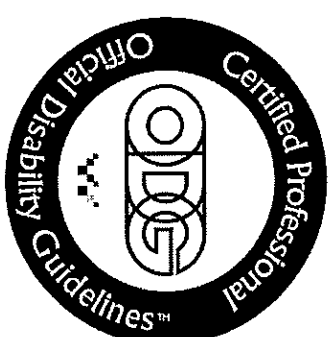
(Real nice).

What no one had seen until now, is an independent and retrospective study on complexity-adjusted claims segmented by compliance levels with ODG.

In a word: groundbreaking.

Check out the May issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and kudos to the authors for another home-run, [A New Method of Assessing the Impact of Evidence-Based Medicine on Claim Outcomes.](#)

They are quickly notching some of the most compelling research anywhere in the industry, and the subject this time around is ODG.



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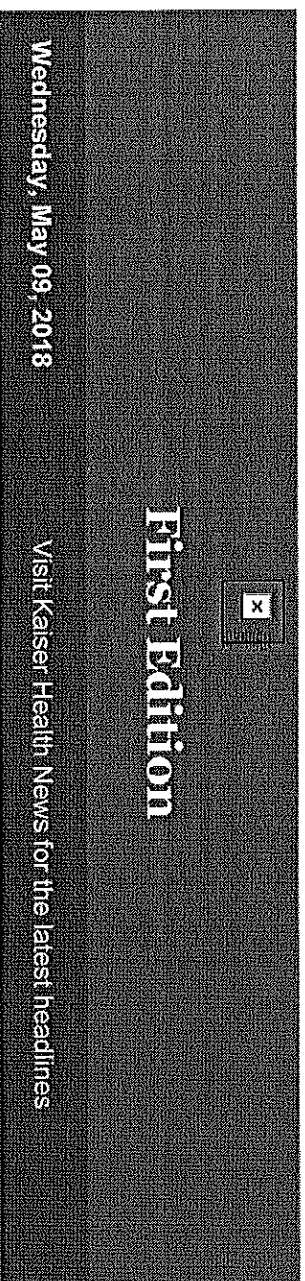
**Alexander, Steven**

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**From:** Kaiser Health News <emails@kaiserhealthnews.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 09, 2018 6:40 AM  
**To:** Alexander, Steven  
**Subject:** KHN First Edition: May 9, 2018

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Today's early morning highlights from the major news organizations.

**Kaiser Health News: When Credit Scores Become Casualties Of Health Care**

After a devastating horse-riding accident in January 2017 landed him in the hospital for about 30 days, requiring trauma care and hospital-based therapy, Jeff Woodard considered himself lucky. The bills amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars. But Woodard's employer-sponsored health insurance limited his out-of-pocket maximum payment to \$5,000. He reached that "within like a day," he recalled. His retired parents relocated from their small town in Massachusetts to help Woodard, now 27, who lives just outside of Denver, through his recovery. With their support, and regular outpatient therapy, he returned to working full time in just two months. (Luthra, 5/9)

**Kaiser Health News: Hoping To See Your Doctor Via Telemedicine? Here's A Quick Guide.**

Tucked into the federal budget law Congress passed in February was a provision that significantly expands the use of telemedicine — long a hyped health care reform, and



now poised to go mainstream within five to 10 years. "There's much broader recognition of the benefits," said Mei Wa Kwong, executive director of the Center for Connected Health Policy, a research group that promotes telemedicine in Sacramento, Calif. "The law is the latest to make telemedicine more accessible. But we still have a ways to go before most consumers are aware of the option." (Findlay, 5/9)

**Kaiser Health News: 4 Takeaways From Trump's Plan To Rescind CHIP Funding**  
President Donald Trump wants to employ a rarely used budget maneuver called "rescission" to eliminate \$15 billion in federal spending, including \$7 billion from the popular Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Administration officials insist the cuts wouldn't negatively affect any programs — rather, they would merely return money into the Treasury that Congress appropriated but is no longer needed. (Galewitz, 5/8)

**The Wall Street Journal: Congress Leery Of Trump's Cuts To Children's Health Program**  
President Donald Trump's proposal to roll back \$7 billion from the popular Children's Health Insurance Program drew immediate bipartisan concern Tuesday, an indication of the hurdles the effort to cut federal spending will face in the Senate. The proposed cuts to the children's health program quickly emerged as the most contentious element of Mr. Trump's request that Congress rescind about \$15 billion in funds that had been previously authorized but not spent. "It is a red flag with me," Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R., W.Va.) said of the proposed CHIP cuts, noting she was reviewing the proposal. "I've been a big proponent of CHIP from the beginning. It's vital to our state." (Peterson, 5/8)

**The Associated Press: CDC Boss Gets \$165,300 Pay Cut From Record-Setting Salary**  
The new head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has gotten a big salary reduction. A spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services said Tuesday that Dr. Robert Redfield Jr.'s new salary will be \$209,700, down from \$375,000. The previous figure was at least \$150,000 more than any previous CDC director had received. (5/8)

**The Washington Post: CDC Director's Salary Now Set At \$209,700 Instead Of \$375,000**  
"Dr. Redfield did not want his compensation to become a distraction from the important

work of the CDC and asked that his salary be reduced," said Caitlin Oakley, a spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services, which includes the CDC. "Dr. Redfield is being paid in accordance with the formula used to pay the prior three CDC directors. Using that formula, his compensation for this year will be \$209,700." (Sun, 5/8)

### **The New York Times: C.D.C. Director's Salary Is Reduced To \$209,700 From \$375,000**

The unusually high rate was granted under a provision known as Title 42, which permits the Department of Health and Human Services (and the Environmental Protection Agency) to pay more than the approved government rate if the candidate fills a specific scientific need that cannot otherwise be met. Senator Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington, questioned the use of the exemption in this case, suggesting last month that it might not have been appropriate. She asked the health and human services secretary, Alex M. Azar II, who oversees the C.D.C., to describe the "extensive and exhaustive effort" that was supposed to be made to find a director before hiring Dr. Redfield at the unusually high salary. (Kaplan, 5/8)

### **The Associated Press: Drug Supply Firm Execs Say They Didn't Cause Opioids Crisis**

Top executives of the nation's leading wholesale drug distributors told Congress under oath Tuesday that their companies didn't help cause the nation's deadly opioid epidemic, drawing bipartisan wrath that included one lawmaker suggesting prison terms for some company officials. The confrontation came at a House subcommittee hearing at which legislators asked why huge numbers of potentially addictive prescription opioid pills had been shipped to West Virginia, among the states hardest hit by the drug crisis. Lawmakers are making an election-year push for legislation aimed at curbing a growing epidemic that saw nearly 64,000 people die last year from drug overdoses, two-thirds from opioids. (5/8)

### **The Washington Post: Opioid Crisis: Drug Executives Express Regret To Congress On Tuesday, One Says His Company Contributed To The Epidemic**

A major distributor of powerful painkillers apologized Tuesday for the company's role in facilitating the flow of highly addictive painkillers into U.S. communities, the first time a corporation has expressed regret for involvement in the opioid crisis. George Barrett, executive chairman of Cardinal Health, said he is sorry the company did not act faster

to impede the shipping of millions of hydrocodone and oxycodone pills to two small pharmacies in West Virginia. The state has the nation's highest rate of opioid overdose death; the epidemic now claims tens of thousands of lives each year. (Zezima and Higham, 5/8)

### **The Wall Street Journal: Opioid Shipments To Small Towns Come Under Spotlight At Hearing**

Most company executives told a House hearing that their companies' actions didn't fan the opioid epidemic in the state. But some acknowledged the industry shipped too many pills and failed to identify major abuses in overprescribing. "With the benefit of hindsight, I wish we had moved faster and asked a different set of questions. I am deeply sorry we did not," said George Barrett, executive board chairman of Cardinal Health Inc. Only one executive, Joseph Mastandrea, chairman of Miami-Luken Inc. said that his company had a "shared responsibility" for the opioid crisis. The testimony marked a pivotal juncture in a year-long bipartisan investigation by a House Energy and Commerce oversight panel into alleged pill dumping in West Virginia. (Armour and Burton, 5/8)

### **The Hill: Distributor Executive Apologizes For Large Opioid Shipments**

From 2007 to 2012, distributors sent more than 780 million hydrocodone and oxycodone pills to West Virginia, about half of which came from AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson, according to a memo from the Energy and Commerce Committee's majority staff. "We have learned much from the investigation but still have many questions," the subcommittee chairman, Rep. Gregg Harper (R-Miss.), said in his opening statement. (Roubein, 5/8)

### **Politico: Opioid Distributors Blame Pharmacies, Docs For Crisis**

Lawmakers on Wednesday showed bipartisan interest in trying to force the executives to take responsibility and chastised several of them for not being upfront with details. Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden (R-Ore.) recounted how one West Virginia town of about 400 people received 9 million opioid pills in two years and how a single pharmacy in a town of 1,800 people got 17 million opioid pills in a decade. Since the 1970s, drug distributors have been responsible for flagging suspicious orders and monitoring sales — something Walden suggested has not been done. (Haberhorn and Ehley, 5/8)

### **The Wall Street Journal: California Counties Jump Into Opioid Litigation**

As lawsuits over the opioid crisis have spread nationwide, the country's most populous state has largely stayed on the sidelines. Now, 30 counties in California are jumping in, seeking recovery for alleged taxpayer losses from the major makers and distributors of opioid painkillers. The counties, largely centered in the rural northern and central regions of the state, are each filing lawsuits in federal court. The actions will likely be sent to a federal judge in Ohio, who is overseeing hundreds of opioid lawsuits filed across the country. (Randazzo, 5/8)

### **The Hill: Schumer: Dems Will Be 'Relentless' In Attacking GOP For Premium Hikes**

Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Tuesday that Democrats are going to be "relentless" in attacking Republicans for looming ObamaCare premium hikes as Democrats seek to harness the issue for the midterm elections. Schumer pointed to proposals that have been released in recent days showing double-digit premium increases for next year, with insurers citing the GOP repeal of ObamaCare's individual mandate among the factors driving up premiums. (Sullivan, 5/8)

### **The Hill: GOP Chairman In Talks With Trump Officials On More ObamaCare Actions**

Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) wrote in a recent letter that bipartisan efforts to fix ObamaCare have failed and he is now turning to focus on additional actions the Trump administration can take on its own regarding the health-care law. Alexander worked for months with Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) on a bipartisan effort to provide funding to bring down ObamaCare premiums, but the effort fell apart in March. Alexander, in a letter to supporters sent Monday and obtained by The Hill, said he does not see any path forward for bipartisanship on the issue. (Sullivan, 5/8)

### **The Associated Press: House Panel OKs Plan To Grow VA Private Care, A Trump Pledge**

A House committee approved a wide-ranging plan Tuesday to give veterans more freedom to see doctors outside the Veterans Affairs health system and fix a budget crisis in its troubled Choice private-sector program, a major step toward fulfilling President Donald Trump's promise to expand private care options. The \$5.1 billion plan includes \$5.2 billion to avert a catastrophic shutdown of Choice. The program is slated

to run out of money as early as May 31, causing disruptions in medical care to tens of thousands of patients. (5/8)

#### **The Hill: House Panel Advances Major VA Reform Bill**

The legislation, called the VA Mission Act, advanced through the House Veterans' Affairs Committee by a 20-2 vote, a key first step to get the bill to President Trump for a signature before the end of the month. The bill would expand the number of veterans who are eligible to see private sector health specialists, as well as entitle veterans enrolled in the VA system to see a private doctor twice a year without a copay. (Weixel, 5/8)

#### **Politico: Trump's 'America First' Agenda On Drug Pricing Could Backfire Around The World**

President Donald Trump wants Americans to get lower prices for medicines — and the rest of the world may pay for it. His "America First" message on drugs at home, coupled with pro-pharmaceutical industry policies abroad, could lead to higher costs for patients around the world — without making drugs more affordable for those in the U.S. Trump on Friday plans to deliver his long-promised speech on how to lower drug costs, addressing an industry he has in the past accused of "getting away with murder." (Karin-Smith and Wheaton, 5/9)

#### **CNN Money: Just Who Gets Those Big Drug Price Rebates?**

Prescription drug manufacturers dole out billions of dollars in rebates every year, but these savings don't usually trickle down directly to consumers. That may change if the Trump administration has its way. Officials are looking to require insurers to pass at least part of these concessions along to Medicare beneficiaries, which could prompt changes in the broader insurance market as well. Drug rebates have become an essential, but opaque part of the pharmaceutical industry. However, they are now in the spotlight as the Trump administration seeks ways to lower drug prices. President Donald Trump is expected to give a speech this week on drug prices, with rebates playing a central role. (Luhby, 5/7)

#### **The New York Times: Valeant, Distancing Itself From Its Past, Will Change Its Name To Bausch Health**

Valeant Pharmaceuticals International, the company whose enormous price increases on old drugs helped fuel public outrage over high drug costs, is changing its name, the

company announced Tuesday. The new name will be Bausch Health Companies, to reflect the company's better-known and more respected subsidiary, the eye care company Bausch + Lomb, which it acquired in 2013. The company announced the change, which will take effect in July, as part of its first-quarter earnings. (Thomas, 5/8)

**The Associated Press: Valeant, A New Business Model And Now, A New Name**  
CEO Joseph Papa said in a prepared statement that the name change is "a major step forward" in the company's transformation. Valeant Pharmaceuticals International Inc. fell into the crosshairs of Washington a couple years ago after an extended acquisition spree of other companies, followed by triple-digit price hikes on critical heart drugs and other medicines. (5/8)

**Bloomberg: The U.S. Is Facing An EpiPen Shortage**  
Adults and children with severe allergies are experiencing problems finding EpiPens after issues with manufacturing of the lifesaving devices, according to patients and pharmacists. More than 400 patients in 45 states have reported difficulty filling prescriptions for Mylan NV's allergy devices and other auto-injectors containing the active ingredient epinephrine since May 2, James Baker, chief executive officer of patient-advocacy group Food Allergy Research & Education, said in an interview. (Edney, 5/8)

**Stat: Novartis Paid Shell Company Controlled By Trump's Attorney**  
In an unexpected twist, Novartis has gotten caught up in the messy investigation into Michael Cohen, President Trump's personal attorney. The drug maker apparently entered into a previously undisclosed agreement with Essential Consultants, which is reportedly a shell company that Cohen used to make payments for various matters. (Silverman, 5/8)

**The Associated Press: US Panel Leaves Prostate Screening Up To Men, Their Doctors**  
Whether to get screened for prostate cancer is a question that men aged 55 to 69 should decide themselves in consultation with their doctors, according to finalized guidance issued Tuesday by an influential panel of health care experts. New evidence suggests that PSA blood tests can slightly reduce the chances of dying from the disease for some men, so those decisions may be a little easier. Though screening can

sometimes lead to drastic, needless treatment, the panel says that can sometimes be avoided with close monitoring when cancer is detected. (5/8)

**Los Angeles Times: Experts Have New Advice On Prostate Cancer Screening. Here's Why They Put It Back On The Table**

For men 70 and older, the task force stuck with an earlier recommendation against routine prostate cancer screening. The new guidance for men in late middle age is an unusual reversal of advice the panel offered in 2012. At that time, the task force suggested that for most men at any age, getting screened for prostate cancer just wasn't worth the risks — including anxiety, infection, erectile dysfunction and incontinence — of the unnecessary treatment that too often came with it. (Healy, 5/8)

**Stat: Can Precision Medicine Do For Depression What It's Done For Cancer?**

The idea of precision medicine for depression is quickly gaining ground — just last month, Stanford announced it is establishing a Center for Precision Mental Health and Wellness. And depression is one of many diseases targeted by All of Us, the National Institute of Health campaign launched this month to collect DNA and other data from 1 million Americans. Doctors have been treating cancer patients this way for years, but the underlying biology of mental illness is not as well understood. (Thielking, 5/9)

**The Associated Press: Duped Patients Crowdfund For Bogus Medical Care, Study Says**

They're the tech-age version of donor jars at the diner: crowdfunding websites that aim to link ailing people with strangers willing to help pay for medical treatment. But new research suggests duped patients sometimes crowdfund to pay for bogus stem cell treatments. A study published Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association focused on for-profit clinics that use direct-to-consumer advertising for costly unproven stem-cell treatments for conditions including chronic lung disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis and arthritis. Treatments are often marketed as cures or with a promise for vastly improved health. (5/8)

**NPR: Video Game Processors And Artificial Intelligence Take Scientists Inside Living Cells**

A new application of artificial intelligence could help researchers solve medical mysteries ranging from cancer to Alzheimer's. It's a 3D model of a living human cell that lets scientists study the interior structures of a cell even when they can only see the

exterior and the nucleus — the largest structure in a cell. The model was unveiled to the public Wednesday by the Allen Institute for Cell Science in Seattle. (Hamilton, 5/9)

#### **The New York Times: Do Fathers Who Exercise Have Smarter Babies?**

Exercise changes the brains and sperm of male animals in ways that later affect the brains and thinking skills of their offspring, according to a fascinating new study involving mice. The findings indicate that some of the brain benefits of physical activity may be passed along to children, even if a father does not begin to exercise until adulthood. (Reynolds, 5/9)

#### **The Wall Street Journal: Tiger Woods Takes Ibuprofen To Prevent Back Pain. Should You?**

It was as casual as pulling out a driver. As Tiger Woods stood in the 10th tee box on the first day of the Masters, he removed a white bottle from his bag, poured two white pills into his hand and swallowed them. "It's called ibuprofen," Woods explained afterward. "My surgeon says to take it all day." The mid-round medication has become a form of preventive maintenance for Woods, who has said he is feeling better lately than he has in several years. And for him, after four back surgeries, it appears to be working. His comeback continues in this week's Players Championship. (Costa, 5/8)

#### **The Washington Post: Woman With A Cerebrospinal Fluid Leak — Not Allergies — Has Surgery At Nebraska Medicine**

For years, Kendra Jackson battled an incessantly runny nose — sniffing and sneezing, blowing and losing sleep each night. Jackson said she initially thought she was getting a cold, then, as her symptoms persisted, doctors suggested it was likely seasonal allergies, putting her among the more than 50 million Americans who struggle with them each year. But the symptoms never cleared up, and, as the years went by, Jackson started to worry that it might be something worse. (Bever, 5/8)

#### **Los Angeles Times: 'We Are Humans Too': Voices Of UCLA's Striking Custodians, Hospital Aides And Imaging Technicians**

This week, thousands of UC employees are staging a three-day strike for better pay and working conditions. On Monday, more than 20,000 custodians, cooks, lab technicians, nurse aides and other members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299 walked off their jobs. By Tuesday, two more unions joined in sympathy strikes. The union and UC reached a bargaining



impassé last year. The university has said it won't meet the workers' demands. (Resmovits, 5/8)

### **Los Angeles Times: UC Labor Strike Expands With Show Of Support From More Unions**

Fong Chuu is a registered nurse who has assisted with countless liver transplants, kidney surgeries and gastric bypasses during 34 years at UCLA. Working with her are scrub technicians who sterilize equipment, hand medical instruments to the surgeon and dress patient wounds. They are a team, Chuu says, which is why she walked off her job Tuesday in support of those technicians and other members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299. The 25,000 member AFSCME local, the University of California's largest employee union, launched a three-day strike Monday. (Watanabe, 5/8)

**The Associated Press: Bill On Guns And Mental Health Stalls In Colorado Capitol**  
Douglas County Sheriff Tony Spurlock begged state lawmakers to pass legislation making it easier to confiscate firearms from someone considered a danger to themselves or others. People, he said, like the man who shot and killed a young sheriff's deputy in suburban Denver on New Year's Eve. A week later, Republicans in the state Senate refused to send the bill to a floor vote, unconvinced by the prominent GOP district attorneys and sheriffs who argued that it would protect officers dealing with people in the midst of mental health crises. (5/8)

### **The Associated Press: UMaine Brings Goats To Campus To Help Stressed Students**

The University of Maine has deployed a herd of goats to help students get through a stressful finals season at the end of the semester. There was a line of students waiting this week to get close to the goats. WABI-TV reports the goal of the goats is to cheer students up who may be dealing with stress. (5/9)

### **The Washington Post: Hepatitis C: Nurse Accused Of Using Dirty Needles And Exposing Patients To Infection**

A Washington state emergency room nurse has resigned and her license has been suspended after accusations that she exposed patients to hepatitis C by stealing narcotics and using her own needle to administer their medication. Officials with the

State Department of Health said Monday that Cora Weberg's nursing license has been suspended "due to alleged diversion of controlled substances." (Bever, 5/8)

**The Washington Post: Company Sold \$25,000 'Service Dogs' That Were Really Just Untrained Puppies, Virginia Says**

Customers turned to Service Dogs by Warren Retrievers for a potentially lifesaving tool: highly trained dogs that would alert them, with the nudge of a nose or paw, to spikes or dips in blood sugar. What they got, the state of Virginia alleged on Tuesday, were "little more than incredibly expensive pets." A lawsuit, filed by Attorney General Mark R. Herring in the Madison County Circuit Court, accuses the company of violating the state's Consumer Protection Act by charging \$18,000 to \$27,000 for 3-month-old Labrador retriever puppies that were unable to perform their task or even to walk properly on leashes, respond when called, or remain calm around loud noises or new people. Customers were told that they would receive ample "scent training" support; instead, their requests for assistance were regularly ignored, the suit says. (Brulliard, 5/8)

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**Alexander, Steven**

**From:** Policy Matters Ohio <news@policymattersohio.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 04, 2016 1:46 PM  
**To:** Alexander, Steven  
**Subject:** Policy Matters welcomes three new board members

Policy Matters Ohio

For immediate release  
Contact Amy Hanauer  
216.361.9801

## Three leaders join Policy Matters board

Melissa Cropper, Chris Mabe and Indigo Bishop to help steer institute

Policy Matters Ohio is pleased to welcome extraordinary new board members Melissa Cropper, Chris Mabe and Indigo Bishop.

**Melissa Cropper** is president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers, which represents 20,000 educators and support staff across Ohio. Melissa was a librarian in Georgetown, Ohio, is a leader at state and national levels, and is particularly concerned about children in poverty. "Melissa is at the forefront of making sure that Ohio's lowest-income students receive top quality teaching in an environment that respects the whole child," said Amy Hanauer, executive director of Policy Matters. "We're extremely grateful that she is willing to lend her valuable time to our organization."





**Chris Mabe** is president of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association, a graduate of the Harvard University Trade Union Program and worked as a corrections sergeant at the Lorain Correctional Institution. From Grafton, Mabe is an international vice president of AFSCME International and occupies the prestigious labor seat on the Ohio Department of Veterans' Services Committee. "Chris is an innovative worker-leader who works to reduce over-incarceration, make Ohio's correctional institutions safer and more effective, and improve the prospects for successful re-entry of formerly incarcerated adults into society," Hanauer said.

**Indigo Bishop** is Cleveland action strategist for IOBY (In Our Back Yard), and a rising neighborhood and civic leader. A lifelong Cleveland resident, Indigo mobilizes neighbors who have good ideas to become powerful citizen leaders, making change in their own backyards. "Indigo brings a special understanding of how neighbors come together to revitalize their communities, and we are eager to work with her to create policies that help generate that kind of action," Hanauer said.



"Chris, Indigo and Melissa are three phenomenal leaders from across Ohio who will bring insight, energy, and commitment to our board of directors," said Kamla Lewis, chair of the Policy Matters nominating committee. "We are happy to welcome them to Policy Matters."

[Read release online](#)

###

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**From:** Ohioans Against the Reckless Dialysis Amendment <[info@recklessdialysisamendment.com](mailto:info@recklessdialysisamendment.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 10, 2018 11:39 AM  
**To:** Alexander, Steven  
**Subject:** Ohio Kidney Patient, Healthcare Groups Oppose Reckless Dialysis Amendment

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Tuesday, July 10, 2018

## Ohio Kidney Patient, Healthcare Groups Unite Against Reckless Dialysis Amendment

(COLUMBUS) – [Ohioans Against the Reckless Dialysis Amendment](#), a broad coalition of leading kidney care organizations, nurses, physicians and patient advocates, today announced its opposition to a proposed Constitutional Amendment that threatens to reduce access to Ohio's 326 out-patient dialysis clinics for the 18,000 Ohioans suffering from kidney failure.

Dialysis providers are among the most regulated healthcare provider groups in the country. All out-patient clinics are licensed by the Ohio Department of Health, certified by the Federal Centers for Medicare and

Medicaid Services (CMS), and highly regulated under current state and federal laws and regulations. Current laws and regulations address, among other things, patient safety; environmental cleanliness; infection prevention and control; emergency preparedness; staff training and continuing education; and water system and equipment maintenance. Clinics must also submit to unannounced quality assessments and inspections by the Ohio Department of Health.

"The proposed amendment was written by a California-based special interest group with no experience in dialysis care and – without any evidence of a problem – would recklessly lock dangerous, arbitrary rules into the Ohio Constitution, threatening access to high-quality care for thousands of Ohioans," said Diane Wish, co-founder and president of the Ohio Renal Association (ORA). "What's worse, the amendment calls for rebates that will end up in the pockets of insurance companies, not patients."

Wish, a registered nurse with more than 40 years of experience in providing dialysis treatment, is joined by other kidney care experts and physicians in opposition to the proposed amendment initiated by the California-based SEIU-UHW West.

"I've seen first-hand the devastating health consequences my dialysis patients face without proper access to care," said Dr. Henry Wehrum, a nephrologist (kidney specialist) with nearly 30 years of experience in the field, who also serves on the board of the Ohio Osteopathic Association (OOA). "The Ohio Constitution is simply not the place for complicated healthcare policy. And because it's written as a Constitutional Amendment, when things go wrong it can only be changed by another Constitutional Amendment – that's not a risk I'm willing to take on behalf of my patients."

Michael Needham, president and CEO of the Kidney Foundation of Ohio (KFO) added, "the Kidney Foundation of Ohio opposes the amendment because it will harm patients, not help them. The Amendment threatens to reduce the number of centers available to Ohioans, which would be especially harmful to vulnerable patients." The Kidney Foundation of Ohio is a patient advocacy group that has been providing a broad-based program of direct assistance to those with kidney disease since 1950.

To date, the organizations opposing the amendment include:

- Academy of Medicine of Cleveland and Northern Ohio

- Chronic Disease Coalition
- Diabetes Dayton
- Dialysis Patient Citizens
- Global Healthy Living Foundation
- Kidney Care Council
- Kidney Care Partners
- Kidney Foundation of Ohio
- National Renal Administrators Association
- Nonprofit Kidney Care Alliance
- Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Ohio Osteopathic Association
- Ohio Renal Association
- Ohio Sickle Cell and Health Association
- Ohio State Medical Association
- Renal Physicians Association
- Renal Support Network

Based on campaign finance filings, the California-based SEIU is believed to have hired hundreds of paid petition circulators, many from out-of-state, to gather signatures from Ohio voters. On Wednesday, July 4, the group submitted signatures to the Ohio Secretary of State in an attempt to qualify the issue for the November 6 Ohio statewide ballot. The petitions and signatures are now under review by elections officials.

“The SEIU has a long history of abusing the ballot issue process to advance its own political agenda,” said coalition spokesperson Gene Pierce. “That its amendment would actually harm Ohio dialysis patients comes as no surprise to those familiar with the SEIU’s strong-arm tactics.”

Among the proposed Constitutional mandates are provisions directing the Ohio Department of Health to establish arbitrary revenue limits for Ohio clinics and require rebates to private health insurance companies should revenues exceed those arbitrary limits. The amendment excludes Medicare, Medicaid



and other government payers — which cover nearly 90 percent of dialysis patients in Ohio — from receiving rebates, leaving only private health insurance companies able to receive them. The amendment does not require insurance companies to pass on any savings to patients.

Coalition members are concerned that arbitrary revenue limits will force some dialysis providers to consolidate operations or close locations, reducing access to critical dialysis care — particularly for patients in rural, urban, and underserved areas.

The non-partisan coalition is planning a statewide campaign to educate Ohio voters on the ballot issue's dangerous consequences, should the issue be placed on the ballot.

The estimated 18,000 Ohioans suffering from end stage renal disease (ESRD) typically receive life-preserving dialysis treatments in a clinic three times a week, with each visit taking three to four hours. According to national research, missing even one dialysis treatment increases a patient's risk of death by 30 per cent. Find more information on ESRD in Ohio [here](#).



*PAID FOR BY OHIOANS AGAINST THE RECKLESS DIALYSIS AMENDMENT*

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## Alexander, Steven

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**From:** Parsons, Jason  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2018 12:58 PM  
**To:** House\_All  
**Subject:** Reminder: Open Enrollment 2018!  
**Attachments:** 2018-2019 Pathways Open Enrollment.pdf; Open Enrollment 2018.ppsx  
**Importance:** High

**REMINDER: Open Enrollment 2018 end tomorrow. Please let me know if you need assistance.**

**From:** Parsons, Jason  
**Sent:** Friday, May 18, 2018 9:33 AM  
**To:** House\_All <House\_All@ohiohouse.gov>  
**Subject:** Open Enrollment 2018!  
**Importance:** High

**Open Enrollment 2018 will take place May 21 through June 1, 2018. All changes made during open enrollment will take effect July 1, 2018, and remain effective through June 30, 2019.**

**Please read the information listed below, along with the attached power point, as they outline important changes for the upcoming benefit year!**

### **Vision Plan**

- **Beginning July 1, 2018, the vision plan administrator will change from VSP to EyeMed.** Employees currently enrolled in vision coverage will receive a welcome packet from EyeMed in June with two identification cards. Note, ID cards are not required when using the benefit.

### **Behavioral Health**

- **Employees enrolled in medical coverage will receive an ID card from Optum Behavioral Solutions in June for use with their behavioral health coverage.**

### **Take Charge! Live Well!**

- **The third-party administrator for the wellness program, known as Take Charge! Live Well!, is now Sharecare, which acquired Healthways in 2016.** The program remains the same and is being administered by the same staff and health coaches.

**Below is the link to the DAS website for open enrollment:**

**<http://www.das.ohio.gov/Open-Enrollment>**

**IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A CHANGE IN STATUS OR DEPENDENTS, YOU DO NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING DURING OPEN ENROLLMENT.**

If you prefer to review a hard copy of the Pathways to Open Enrollment, there are copies available in the 12<sup>th</sup> floor administrative office. Feel free to contact me regarding any questions or concerns with the 2018 Open Enrollment.

**Jason Parsons**

**Fiscal Officer**

**Ohio House of Representatives**

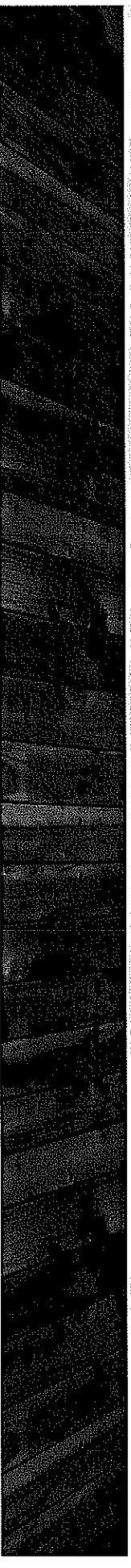
**(614) 466-2114**

# OPEN ENROLLMENT 2018

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**May 21 through June 1, 2018**

**(Effective July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019)**



# OHIO MED PPO PLAN

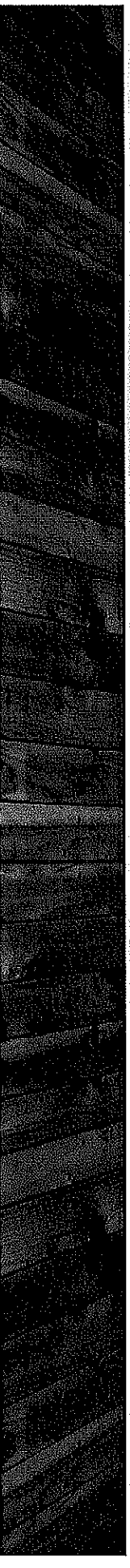
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- ❑ Three administrators will manage the Ohio Med PPO plan
  - Aetna
  - Anthem
  - Medical Mutual
  - The rate will be the same for all administrators
  - Employees will automatically be assigned to an administrator



## IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATOR HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ Employee contributions- 'Family w/Spouse', 'Family w/o Spouse', and 'Single' rates will be the same with all administrators
- ☐ Major benefit levels- Co-pays, deductibles, and out-of-pocket maximums will be the same with all administrators



# MEDICAL RATES

☐ Rates are increasing

Full-Time Employee Medical Contributions						
Full-Time Permanent Part-Time Permanent (30 or more hours a week) Part-Time Temporary (30 or more hours a week) Biweekly Paid Employee Contributions <sup>1</sup> 15% tier			Full-Time employees Monthly Paid Employee Contributions <sup>1</sup> 15% tier			
Employee Share	State Share	Total	Employee Share	State Share	Total	
Single	\$49.40	\$278.88	\$328.28	\$107.04	\$604.25	\$711.29
Family Minus Spouse	\$135.27	\$765.47	\$900.74	\$293.09	\$1,658.48	\$1,951.57
Family Plus Spouse <sup>2</sup>	\$141.04	\$765.47	\$906.51	\$305.59	\$1,658.48	\$1,964.07

<sup>1</sup>These rates represent the total amount that will be contributed from your paycheck.

<sup>2</sup>Family Plus Spouse rates above include a charge of \$12.50 per month to cover a spouse.

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